

CHAPTER 19

MARYAM

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

As this *Sūra* primarily deals with the story of Mary round which revolve all the other incidents mentioned in it and as it particularly draws our attention to the distinctive features of Mary's character and personality, it bears the title of Maryam, despite the fact that great Prophets of God like Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Ishmael and other Divine Messengers like Idris, Zachariah and Yaḥyā have also found prominent mention in the *Sūra*.

The consensus of opinion among such Companions of the Holy Prophet as have expressed any view about the date of the revelation of this *Sūra*, regards it as of Meccan origin. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd who was one of the earliest Companions of the Holy Prophet holds the view that Banī Isrā'īl, Kahf and Maryam were among the *Sūrās* that were revealed very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry (Bukhārī). Christian writers such as Rodwell, Wherry and Muir, also consider it as having been revealed at Mecca. It is a well-known fact of history, related by the historian Ibn Ishāq, that when in the early days of Islam the persecution of Muslims exceeded all bounds and life at Mecca became quite unsafe for them, some of them were asked by the Holy Prophet to emigrate to Abyssinia. Realizing that the persecuted Muslims had found safe refuge in a foreign land and that their evil designs to nip the young and tender plant of Islam in the bud had been frustrated, a deputation of Meccans led by the famous 'Amr bin al-ʿĀṣ went to Abyssinia to ask the Negus, its Christian king, for extradition of the Muslims who had taken refuge in his country, and in order to excite his jealousy told him that they did not accord to Jesus and Mary that high spiritual status in which they were held by the Christians and even defamed and disgraced them. Before, however, granting the deputation's request, the Negus asked Ja'far, the leader of the refugee Muslims, as to what he had to say in the matter. Upon this Ja'far recited those verses (from 17th to 41st verse) of this *Sūra* which shed full light on the true status of Jesus and his mother. On hearing the Quranic verses the Negus was greatly moved and he said that his own belief about Jesus and Mary was not a whit different from that of the Muslims. Consequently he flatly refused to accede to the request of the Meccans and assured the Muslims that they could live in his country in perfect security and freedom.

From these incidents it becomes quite clear that this *Sūra* was revealed before the emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia. The emigration, as historically proved, took place in the fifth

year of the Call and the Muslims must have taken some months to learn and memorize it. Thus taking all relevant historical data into consideration the fact becomes established beyond all reasonable doubt that this *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca in the first half of the fifth year or probably towards the end of the fourth year of the birth of Islam. Muir, however, against all proved facts of history holds the view that the *Sūra* was revealed towards the closing years of the Holy Prophet's life at Mecca while Wherry is of the opinion that it was revealed in the fifth or sixth year of the Call *i.e.* about a year *after* the emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia. But both these views are evidently wrong, being inconsistent with reliable historical evidence mentioned above.

The reluctance of these gentlemen to accept an established fact of history and their attempt to adumbrate quite an untenable theory is not without reason. Before the emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia the Holy Prophet had preached his mission in Mecca for about four years while the Word of God was continuously being revealed to him but it had lacked any detailed reference to Christian dogmas and doctrines. But all of a sudden a few months before the emigration took place the revelation came thick and fast denouncing and demolishing these false doctrines till a whole *Sūra* (the present *Sūra*) dealing with them became revealed. This fact was not accidental. It was designed and deliberate. The Muslims were about to emigrate to Abyssinia, a Christian country. The Revealer of the Qur'ān knew that in their new place of emigration they would come in contact with Christians and would have to discuss Christian beliefs. So by the revelation of this *Sūra*, the Muslims were armed with a full and thorough refutation of all basic Christian doctrines in advance. This fact pointed to an inescapable inference that the Qur'ān was the revealed Word of the All-Knowing God Himself. The inference was so patent and irresistible that in order to minimize its importance Muir and Wherry had to have recourse to a novel, albeit, unfounded theory.

Connection with the Preceding *Sūrās*

The connection of this *Sūra* with the *Sūrās* that precede it *i.e.* *Banī Isrā'īl* and *Kahf*, consists in the fact that some account of the rise and progress of Jews and Christians was given in those two *Sūrās*. In fact in those two *Sūrās* it was stated that the rise of Islam would closely resemble that of the Jewish Dispensation. In *Sūra Banī Isrā'īl* we were told that Jews would suffer national eclipse twice and twice would they rise to power and glory, and that the followers of Islam would also meet a similar fate. Like the Jews they would rise to prosperity twice and twice like them would they decline and fall. It may be mentioned here that in the era of the Prophets David and Solomon when the political power of the Israelites had reached its zenith, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia destroyed Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish temporal and spiritual power and glory, and carried away into captivity a large number of Jews, their royal family and even some of their Prophets. This catastrophe took place about the year 586 B.C. After long years—in 516 B.C., however, they were brought back to Jerusalem by Cyrus, the king of Media and Persia, and the city was rebuilt.

Jerusalem was destroyed for the second time by Roman forces under Titus in 70 A.D., amid circumstances of unparalleled ferocity and horror, and the Temple of Solomon was burnt down.

This second destruction of Jerusalem brought about the complete and irrevocable ruin of the temporal power of Jews, and they became dispersed all over the world (Jew. Enc. & Enc. Bib., under "Jerusalem"), till in 1947-1948, through the machinations of British and American Governments the State of Israel came into being. These two destructions of the Jewish temporal power correspond to the two destructions of the temporal power of Islam. Its first destruction took place when in 1258 A.D. Baghdad, the centre of the political power and glory of Muslims, was laid waste by the Tartar hordes under Halakū Khān who put to the sword the entire royal family and killed in cold blood about two million Muslims. The second eclipse of the political power of Muslims began towards the latter half of the last century. Better days, however, seem now to have dawned on them. See also 17 : 6-9 & 105.

In *Sūra Kahf* the same subject was dealt with at some greater length, viz., that after their second national degradation the Israelites would rise to great progress and prosperity and would spread in the world by accepting Jesus Christ, their Messiah and the last Prophet of the Mosaic Dispensation, and that an analogous phenomenon awaited the Islamic Dispensation. And as in the case of the Mosaic Dispensation the "Dwellers of the Cave" became the means and instrument of the rise to prosperity and power of Christianity, which in fact, is a branch of Judaism, so would Islam attain the heights of glory and eminence and would prevail over other Faiths through the missionary efforts of the followers of the Messiah of the Islamic Dispensation who from time to time would have to seek refuge in places of shelter from persecution and oppression.

Then towards the close of *Sūra Kahf* mention was made of the *Isrā'* (Spiritual Ascension) of Moses which symbolically hinted that jealousy and hatred would arise between the Mosaic and Islamic Dispensations. The Mosaic Dispensation would begin to view with envy the rise of the followers of Islam who unfortunately lulled into a false sense of security would relapse into complacency. Their adversaries—the followers of Jesus Christ—the standard-bearers of the Mosaic Dispensation in the time of the Messiah of Islamic Dispensation—taking full advantage of this complacency of the Muslims would vanquish them and break their power.

Then to further elucidate the similarity between the two Dispensations a brief mention was made of how through Dhu'l Qarnain the Jews regained their lost glory. This implied that when the power and glory of Islam would sink to its lowest ebb, God would save its followers from national ruin through a Dhu'l Qarnain—the Promised Messiah, who would lead them to renewed glory and prosperity. See 18:84.

Thus both *Sūras*, *Banī Isrā'il* and *Kahf*, dealt with the striking parallelism that existed between the two Dispensations, laying added emphasis on the fact that just as the Mosaic Dispensation got a new lease of life through Jesus who was the culminating point of that Dispensation, in the same way Islam would regain its departed power and glory through its own Messiah, the *Khātām al-Khulafā'* i.e. the greatest Khalīfa of the Prophet of Islam. But as real opposition to Islamic Dispensation at the time of its decline was to have come from the followers of Jesus Christ, so was Islam, at the time of its resuscitation, destined to meet real opposition from the same people—the followers of Jesus Christ. Thus the lesson was brought home to Muslims that Christianity was the real enemy of Islam.

After having explained in *Sūra Kahf* that Muslims would sustain national eclipse at the hands of followers of the Messiah of Mosaic Dispensation and would regain their lost glory under the guidance and lead of the Messiah of the Islamic Dispensation, the present *Sūra* proceeds to give a brief history of the Christian Faith. It does so to tell Muslims that the renaissance of Islam through the Promised Messiah would also take place largely on the lines on which the birth, rise and spread of Christianity had taken place.

The present *Sūra* thus constitutes a third link in the chain in which *Sūrās Banī Isrā'īl* and *Kahf* form respectively the first and second links. In fact, these three *Sūrās* deal with the same subject and follow the same pattern in dealing with that subject.

The concluding connection between *Sūra Kahf* and the present *Sūra* is that whereas towards the end of *Sūra Kahf* great emphasis was laid on the *Sharī'at* and Divine Unity, the present *Sūra* opens with the subject of Jesus's birth and other relevant and important incidents in his life because Jesus's birth and his death were to give rise to two very dangerous misconceptions regarding the *Sharī'at* and Divine Unity and it was necessary to remove these two misconceptions.

Subject-Matter

In the abbreviated letters at the head of the *Sūra* a comparison has been instituted between Christian and Islamic doctrines and attention has been drawn to the fact that while originally Christianity was a Divine religion, later on some false doctrines and dogmas found their way into its teaching. As these doctrines run counter to Divine attributes therefore, a brief account of Jesus's birth has been given to refute them. This account is preceded by a brief mention of Prophet Zachariah, because according to Biblical prophecies Prophet Elijah was to have descended from heaven "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4 : 5); and Jesus on being asked by the Jews about Elijah who was to have appeared before him answered that he was John who had come in his power and spirit (Matt. 11 : 14, 15; 17 : 12; Mark 9 : 13), and that Elijah was not to have come from heaven but like all mortals was to have been born of an earthly mother in the form of another man who was John (Matt. 11 : 11; Luke 7 : 28).

While giving an account of Jesus, the *Qur'ān* proceeds to describe the manner of his birth before beginning to deal with his claims and his teachings, because with the unusual birth of Jesus without the agency of a human father the foundations were laid of the transfer of prophet-hood from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael. The details of the implied significance of this exceptional manner of birth are briefly as follows:—

Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac—from his two senior wives. Ishmael was the first born and Isaac the second son. Abraham had received Divine promises regarding both these sons. Promises about Ishmael are embodied in Gen. 16 : 10-12 ; 17 : 18, 20, while prophecies foretelling the future of Isaac are to be found in Gen. 17 : 19-21. There is, however, a joint prophecy about both Ishmael and Isaac in Gen. 22 : 17, 18. When these verses are read in conjunc-

tion with Gen. 17 : 21, it becomes quite clear that while the covenant with Abraham was to have begun with Isaac it was to have found its consummation in the progeny of both the brothers. The inference is patent that the final manifestation of the covenant was to have taken place in the progeny of Ishmael. But because the full implementation of the covenant required its transfer from the progeny of Isaac to that of Ishmael and because this transfer was bound to cause severe disappointment to the progeny of Isaac, it was essential that the transfer should have taken place gradually and in stages.

It is to this important fact that verses dealing with the birth of Jesus refer. It is hinted in these verses that persistent violation of "the covenant" on the part of Jews brought the Divine decree into operation that henceforward the covenant shall be fulfilled through the progeny of Ishmael. The procedure adopted for bringing about this consummation was this: A virgin was made to give birth to a child who subsequently became the last Successor of Moses. This fact constituted a final warning to Jews that by the birth of Jesus, their last Prophet, without the agency of an Israelite father the covenant with the progeny of Isaac had become reduced to half, but inasmuch as the blood of no Israelite father ran in the veins of Jesus, only that part of the covenant which subsisted through the mother who was an Israelite remained in operation. Thus the exceptional manner chosen for Jesus's birth implied that the period allotted to the progeny of Isaac for the fulfilment of the Divine covenant had terminated, half of it having ended with Jesus's fatherless birth and the other half with his followers having given up the practice of circumcision which was the physical sign and mark of that covenant (Gen. 17 : 23). Thus completely and for ever the progeny of Isaac became deprived of "the covenant".

Then the Qur'ān proceeds to relate some incidents in the life of Jesus and with arguments based on truth and reason exposes the untenability of the false claims that his followers have attributed to him.

After this a reference to the fulfilment of the covenant through Isaac and Moses has been made after which mention is made of Ishmael. Chronologically, however, Ishmael should have been mentioned before Moses but as Moses constituted a most important link of that part of the covenant which was fulfilled through Isaac his mention preceded that of Ishmael.

Then a brief reference to the Prophet Idrīs is made and the words: "And We raised him to a high place" have been added to denote his very high spiritual station. These words point to a spiritual resemblance which Idrīs had with Jesus, viz., that he was spiritually taken up to heaven (Gen. 5 : 24). Idrīs is Enoch of the Bible and about Enoch the Bible says that he walked with God (Gen. 5 : 22) which means that in him Divine attributes found manifestation of a very high order. Analogous expressions have been used about Jesus in the New Testament. But whereas on the basis of such expressions Jesus has been raised to the pedestal of Divinity by his misguided followers, in the presence of similar expressions about Enoch (Idrīs) the latter is considered to be entitled to no higher place than that of a mere human being or at best a Prophet of God. In fact, Enoch seemed to enjoy a certain spiritual superiority over Jesus, inasmuch as according to the Bible he went up to heaven alive and like God, the Father, never tasted of death (Heb. 11 : 5)

After this the *Sūra* reinforces the argument against the godhead of Jesus by saying that if all the Prophets from Adam to Noah and from Noah down to the last Israelite Prophet before Jesus were mere human beings, then why should Jesus who was also only a Prophet of God be invested with Divine attributes and be regarded as God? After this an implied mention is made of the birth of a new Mission and a new Faith and attention is drawn to the fact that circumstances attending the birth of Jesus *i.e.*, his fatherless birth, imply the advent of a Promised Teacher—the Holy Prophet. But it is stated with regret that those to whom this Teacher will address his Message will, because of their pride in their large numbers and great material power, oppose and persecute him. They will not realize that numbers do not prove anything and material power should not deceive them. They are warned that if they rejected the new Message their numbers and their power will not avail them in any manner. They indulge in all sorts of vain talk and refuse to listen to the Holy Prophet. But when as a result of their defiant and persistent rejection of truth and persecution of the Holy Prophet Divine punishment descended upon them, their faculties of seeing and hearing will become sharpened and they will begin to see the evil consequences of their misdeeds and will hear everything clearly and fully. But that will only be a time of vain regret for them. Their power shall break and their glory depart and the possession of the earth shall be given to the followers of the Holy Prophet who will make proper use of it.

As the Resurrection and the existence of life after death were to be widely denied in the Latter Days by Christians with whom the *Sūra* particularly deals, much stress has also been laid on rewards and blessings of the Hereafter, and stale and hackneyed arguments of disbelievers against life after death exposed and refuted. The disbelievers, the *Sūra* says, seem to derive false comfort from their wealth, material means and large numbers and adduce these things as an argument in support of their denial of the life after death and their belief that what really matters is the present life. To this foolish and vain argument of disbelievers the Qur'ān replies that truth must eventually triumph and disbelief come to grief and that till that time the real thing to see is who takes his stand on reason, suffers for his cause and sets a noble example. Surely, he who possesses these prerequisites will ultimately succeed even in this world. The disbelievers should not be deceived by the apparent weakness of believers. Truth always progresses gradually and in stages but it most surely prevails and triumphs in the end.

Next, we are told that disbelievers are always involved in *Shirk* (associating false gods with God) and regard it as a source of great strength. On the contrary, it always proves to be a source of disgrace and humiliation for those who practise it. The very thing that disbelievers regard as a source of strength proves to be a source of weakness for them. The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that when disbelievers are defeated in argument they have recourse to violence. The Holy Prophet is told to ignore the violence of disbelievers, as resort to force on their part will lead only to victory and predominance of believers. It will afford them a legitimate cause to take up arms in self-defence and God being always on their side they will surely win, and thus the adoption of an unjust and aggressive attitude on the part of disbelievers will recoil on their own heads and will lead to their eventual destruction.

The *Sūra* ends with an answer to an implied objection of the Jews, viz., why has Hebrew been discarded in favour of Arabic as a vehicle for the revelation of Quranic teaching? To this objection the *Sūra* returns the answer that the Arabs are the first addressees of the Qur'ān and it is quite natural that a Message should be addressed to a people in their own tongue so that they may easily understand it and after having understood it should convey it adequately and successfully to others, because it is after a Message has been addressed to a people and after having understood it they reject it, that heavenly punishment overtakes them.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²¹⁴⁶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Kāf Hā Yā 'Ain Ṣād.²¹⁴⁷

كَهْيَعَصَّ ②

^a See 1 : 1.

2146. Commentary:

See 1:1.

2147. Commentary:

A brief note here on abbreviated letters which have been placed at the beginning of some *Sūrās* of the Qur'ān and which are known as المقطعات (*al-Muqatta'āt*) i.e. letters used and pronounced separately, is called for. The *Muqatta'āt* are abbreviations for specific attributes of God and the subject-matter of a *Sūra* before which they are placed has a deep connection with the Divine attributes for which they stand. The various *Muqatta'āt* have not been haphazardly placed at the beginning of different *Sūrās*, nor are their letters combined arbitrarily. There runs a deep and far-reaching connection between the various sets of *Muqatta'āt* and the letters of which they are made also serve a definite purpose. *Sūrās* 2 & 3 are prefaced with the abbreviated letters الم (Alif Lām Mīm), indicating a kinship between their contents. Chapters 4, 5 & 6 have no *Muqatta'āt* placed at their beginning which means that the subject-matter of these three Chapters is subordinate to and follows the pattern of that of the preceding two *Sūrās*. Chapter 7 begins with the abbreviated letters المص (Alif Lām Mīm Ṣād) which combination has the additional letter ص. The next two Chapters (8 & 9) have no *Muqatta'āt* and the following three Chapters (10, 11 & 12) have

the abbreviated letters الر (Alif Lām Rā) placed at their beginning and the 13th Chapter begins with المر (Alif Lām Mīm Rā) i.e. with the addition of م to الر. Chapters 14th and 15th have again the combination الر in their beginning which shows that there exists a certain similarity of subject-matter among all these *Sūrās*. Chapters 16th, 17th and 18th have no *Muqatta'āt* before them which again shows that the subject-matter of these three *Sūrās* is subordinate and similar to that of the preceding *Sūrās*. Chapter 19th is headed with كهيعص (Kāf Hā Yā 'Ain Ṣād) and deals with a particular subject, i.e. the Christian dogmas of Salvation and Atonement. The next six *Sūrās* have no abbreviated letters at their beginning, طه at the head of 20th Chapter, not being treated as *Muqatta'āt*. The following three *Sūrās* are known as the *Sūrās* of طس (Ṭā Sīn) group. With the 29th Chapter the Qur'ān reverts to the same subject which has already been dealt with in *Sūrās* 2 & 3 but in a new form and to fulfil a new need and serve a new purpose, and, therefore, this Chapter again has the *Muqatta'āt* الم (Alif Lām Mīm) in its beginning. The next three Chapters (30, 31 & 32) follow suit and the five Chapters following these *Sūrās* have no *Muqatta'āt*. Chapter ص (Ṣād) begins with the abbreviated letter ص (Ṣād) and the next Chapter (39th) has no *Muqatta'āt*.

The following seven *Sūrās* open with the abbreviated letters حم (Hā Mīm), only Chapter 42 having the letters عسق (Aīn Sin Qāf) added to حم (Hā Mīm). They are known as *Sūrās* of حم group. The next three *Sūrās*, viz., 47th, 48th & 49th again have no *Muqatta'āt* in their beginning. The 50th Chapter is the last Chapter which has an abbreviated letter i.e. ق (Qāf).

This somewhat detailed examination shows that three main categories of *Muqatta'āt* have been used in the Qur'ān and that the *Sūrās* having the same category of *Muqatta'āt* have been placed together which is a further indication of the fact that the subjects dealt with in such *Sūrās* bear a close resemblance to each other and that the *Muqatta'āt* placed in their beginning serve as a key to their subject-matter.

It is also pertinent to note that there is one thing which is common to all those *Sūrās* that have *Muqatta'āt*. They open with the subject of the revelation of the Qur'ān and this is no mere chance.

The system of using abbreviations (*Muqatta'āt*) was in vogue among the Arabs and at present is very popular in Western countries and in its imitation in all Eastern countries.

According to Ummi Hānī, a cousin of the Holy Prophet, he (the Holy Prophet) is reported to have said that in the combined letters كهيعص the letter ك stands for كاف (the All-Sufficient), ه for هاد (the Guide), ع for عليم (the All-Knowing), and ص for صادق (the Truthful). According to Ibn 'Abbās, however, the letter ك stands for كبير (the Great), ه for هاد (the Guide), ي for امين (Who gives peace and protection), ع for عزيز (the Mighty) and ص for صادق (the Truthful). Ibn Mas'ūd and some other Companions interpreted these combined letters as الملك (the

King), الاله (God), العزيز (the Mighty) and المصور (the Fashioner). 'Alī sometimes would preface his prayer with the words : يا كهيعص (Fath).

Different combinations of abbreviated letters signify different subjects and the subject-matter of a particular *Sūra* at the beginning of which a particular combination is placed is governed by it. It has been explained above that the abbreviated letters stand for Divine attributes, but which particular letter stands for which particular Divine attribute becomes clear only by a deep study of the subject-matter of the *Sūra* at the beginning of which those letters are placed. The explanation of كهيعص as given by the Holy Prophet in the ḥadīth narrated by Ummi Hānī must necessarily be accepted as the best and should be preferred to all other explanations. But in this explanation the letter ي has been left out which shows that it does not signify any Divine attribute but has been used only as a letter of interjection, joining the first two Divine attributes with the last two. Thus the explanation of the combined abbreviated letters would read like this: انت كاف انت هاد يا عليم يا صادق i.e. "Thou art Sufficient for all and Thou art the true Guide, O, All-Knowing, Truthful God." Or expanding its sense a little further the expression would mean, "Thou O God, Who knowest all my secrets and art true to Thy promises and art a true Friend, Thou alone canst satisfy all my needs and Thou alone canst guide me."

The four Divine attributes as represented by the combined letters كهيعص expose the falsity of the basic Christian doctrine of Atonement, i.e. salvation through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus which forms one of the principal subjects of the *Sūra* under comment. And if the doctrine of Atonement is proved to be

3. *This is* an account of the mercy of thy Lord *shown* to His servant, Zachariah.²¹⁴⁸

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا ۝

false, the whole structure of the doctrines of the Trinity and godhead of Jesus would automatically fall to the ground.

Of these four attributes عالم or عليم and صادق are the principal and basic attributes and كاف and هاد are subordinate ones and flow from the former two and are their inevitable manifestation and result. If God is عالم (All-Knowing), then there is no place for the dogma of Atonement because this dogma presupposes that God had designed to carry on the business of the world according to a certain plan but His knowledge being defective that plan failed to function and, therefore, God was compelled to offer His own son for sacrifice to save the world. The failure of God's plan contradicts His attribute "All-Knowing" and when God's knowledge is shown to be defective, He cannot claim to be كاف (All-Sufficient) because the Being Who is عالم (All-Knowing) must necessarily be كاف (All-Sufficient).

In the same way the attribute صادق (Truthful) and its subordinate attribute هاد (Guide) demolish this dogma. If God is not the true Guide and salvation without a belief in the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus is impossible, then all Divine Messengers will have to be accepted as so many liars and cheats because, contrary to Christian belief, they preached and taught that salvation was possible only through right beliefs and righteous actions; and a reflection on the truthfulness of God's Messengers constitutes a reflection on the truthfulness of God Himself and consequently on His being هاد i.e.

the true Guide. Thus in this combination of abbreviated letters a hint is given that in dealing with the beliefs and doctrines of Christians, the best way to drive home to them the untenability of their doctrines is to dwell and lay emphasis upon Divine attributes, particularly on the attributes which are represented by the four letters ص, ع, ه, ك.

In fact the best and most effective argument to show that the doctrine of Atonement is entirely unfounded, is to prove that Jesus did not die on the Cross and if this thesis is proved, then the question that by his crucifixion he carried away the sins of humanity does not arise. For a detailed and full discussion, however, of the subject that Jesus did not die on the Cross but after having remained on it only for a few hours was taken down alive, was kept in a sepulchre and then in fulfilment of his own prophecy, viz., "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John. 10: 16), he travelled to Afghanistan and Kashmir to reclaim and retrieve the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel who had been dispersed to these countries by the Babylonian kings, see 23 : 51.

2148. Commentary :

The account of Zachariah precedes the account of Jesus. This is due to two very valid reasons. Yahya, the son of Zachariah, and John of the New Testament, was a harbinger of Jesus. He heralded Jesus's advent and acted as his precursor to give to the Jews the glad tidings that their deliverer was about to make his appearance.

That Yaḥyā or John was Jesus's harbinger is apparent from the following prophecy of Prophet Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4 : 5). The words "the great and dreadful day" here signify the advent of Jesus. This is why when Jesus was asked where Elias was who was to come before him, he replied: "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. 11:14). As according to Malachi's prophecy Elias must have appeared before the coming of Jesus, it was in the fitness of things that while giving an account of Jesus, the Qur'ān should have made a mention of Yaḥyā. Secondly, Mary, the mother of Jesus, had unknowingly become the cause of Yaḥyā's birth. We are told (3 : 38, 39) how Zachariah was deeply moved by a pious reply of Mary and prayed to God to be blessed with a good child like her. Thus whereas Yaḥyā became a harbinger of Jesus, Mary, Jesus's mother having indirectly become the cause of the birth of Yaḥyā may as well be said to have become a precursor of Yaḥyā (John) himself. See also 3 : 38-42.

The words, "Thy Lord" in the sentence, "This is an account of the mercy of thy Lord," appear to be misplaced because whereas the account given in the following verses is that of the mercy of God shown to Zachariah the words "Thy Lord" seem to indicate as if some account is about to be given of God's mercy to the Holy Prophet. In fact these words signify that the account of Divine mercy to Zachariah does imply a mercy to the Holy Prophet also. Prophet Yaḥyā, as stated above,

was a harbinger of Jesus and Jesus was a harbinger of the Holy Prophet. A description of the birth of Yaḥyā followed by a somewhat detailed description of Jesus's birth pointed to the fact that by the introduction of the life accounts of these two Prophets who, in a way, acted as his precursors, the minds of men were being prepared for the acceptance of the Holy Prophet of Islam by an implied reference to the following Biblical prophecies:-

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation (Gen. 17 : 20);

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth (Deut. 18 : 18).

The pronoun "thy" may also possess an oblique but beautiful reference to Mecca, the birth-place of the Holy Prophet. Mecca like Zachariah's wife was barren. For thousands of years it had not heard the voice of God. Now God's mercy was about to dawn upon it. The barren valley of Mecca was about to give birth to the greatest of Adam's sons. To this barrenness of Mecca reference is found in Isaiah 54 : 1.

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

4. "When he called upon his Lord, crying in secret.²¹⁴⁹

5. He said, 'My Lord, ^bthe bones have indeed waxed feeble in me, and the head glistens with hoariness but never, my Lord, have I been unblessed in my prayer to Thee,^{2149A}

6. 'And I fear my relations after me, and ^amy wife is barren. ^dGrant me, therefore, a successor from Thyself,²¹⁵⁰

إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا ۝

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ

شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ۝

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي

عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۝

^a 3 : 39 ; 21 : 90. ^b 3 : 41. ^c 3 : 41 ; 21 : 91. ^d 3 : 39 ; 21 : 90.

2149. Important Words:

نادى (called upon) : نادى الرجل means, he called the man aloud. نادى بسره means, he disclosed his secret. نادى فلاناً means, he consulted him (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words, *when he called upon his Lord, crying in secret*, signify that Zachariah had kept concealed in the inmost recesses of his heart a long cherished desire. When he heard Mary's innocent reply to his query (3 : 38), he was deeply touched and he laid bare his heart before his Lord and Creator and his long-suppressed desire assumed the form of prayer that a good and righteous son like Mary might be born unto him to continue prophethood in the Israelite line. Zachariah had understood from Biblical prophecies and heavenly warnings that were administered to the Jews for their repeated rejection of God's Prophets that prophethood was soon to be transferred from the House of Isaac to that of Ishmael. So he gave vent to his feelings in the form of prayer for the birth of a righteous son.

2149A. Commentary:

Besides the rendering given in the text the words ولم اكن بدعائك رب شقيا may mean, "since Thou hast called me and hast made me a Prophet and Thy blessings and favours have covered me, I have never been unsuccessful in achieving my object."

2150. Important Words :

عاقراً (barren) is derived from عقر . They say عقره i.e. he wounded him ; he wounded him much. عقر الابل means, he cut the feet of the camel. عقر النخلة means, he cut the upper part of the palm-tree so that it dried up and ceased to yield fruit. عقرت المرأة means, the woman became barren. عاقر is used both for man and woman and applied to a woman means, barren; that does not conceive or has ceased to conceive ; and applied to a man it means, barren ; that has no offspring born to him. (Lane & Aqrab).

ولياً (successor) is derived from ولي . They say ولي الرجل i.e. he helped the man; he made friends with him ; he loved him. ولي فلاناً means, he followed such a one immediately without any-one intervening between them ولي means, a friend ; beloved one, helper, master; successor or inheritor etc. (Aqrab). See also 2 : 108.

7. 'That he may be heir to me and heir to the House of Jacob. And "make him, my Lord well-pleasing to Thee."²¹⁵¹

يَرِثْنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ

رَضِيًّا ۝

^a 3 : 39.

Commentary:

In view of the different meanings of the word ولي (successor) given under "Important Words" above, Zachariah's prayer was for such a son as should prove his true successor and should propagate his mission and inherit the spiritual blessings that God had bestowed on the House of Israel.

2151. Commentary:

The prayer of Zachariah is complete in every respect and possesses all the ingredients of a successful prayer. A successful prayer should be offered with fervour and in humility. The supplicant should confess his own weakness and helplessness. He should have firm faith in the power of God to accept his prayers. Zachariah's prayer fulfils all these conditions. He prays to God in words full of extreme pathos. He invokes Divine mercy by referring to his extreme old age and to the barrenness of his wife. He prays fervently and in all humility. He asks for no worldly gains. He prays only for a righteous heir. He felt that righteousness had altogether disappeared from his family and his relations had consigned God to oblivion. He knew that the House of Israel was about to be deprived for ever of the boon of prophethood but still he had not despaired of God's mercy. He hoped that something yet might happen which should save his people and the House of Israel from utter spiritual ruin. He was extremely anxious that the Israelites might not reject

the last Israelite Prophet and might still avert the impending wrath of God. This was Zachariah's wish which he expressed in words full of pathos. He prayed that an heir be born to him who might warn the Israelites to take heed and not to deprive themselves of the light of prophethood by rejecting their own last Prophet. It appears from the Bible that the whole mission of Yahyā for whose birth Zachariah had so fervently prayed consisted in preparing the way for Jesus. He says :

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matt. 3 : 11).

Yahyā tried his utmost to make the task of Jesus easy and to prepare the Jews to accept him. But his efforts proved vain. He himself was imprisoned and murdered. His people rejected him as well as his great successor, Jesus. They even sought to kill the latter on the Cross. Zachariah's prayer was only partly fulfilled as Divine decree had also to be implemented. So Yahyā was born to Zachariah in fulfilment of his prayer but he (Yahyā) failed to soften the hearts of his people. They did not believe in Jesus and thus could not avert the wrath of God and became deprived for ever of the light of prophethood which was the real object of Zachariah's prayer. The Divine will prevailed and prophethood became transferred from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael.

8. *God said, 'O Zachariah, "We give thee glad tidings of a son whose name shall be Yahyā. We have not made any one before him^b of that name."*²¹⁵²

يَزَكِّرِيَا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِعِلْمِ اسْمِهِ يَحْيَىٰ ۖ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ
لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَيِّئًا ۝

^a 3 : 40; 21 : 91. ^b 19 : 66.

2152. Important Words :

سمي (of that name) is derived from سمي . They say سما و سمي الرجل زيداً *i. e.* he named the man Zaid. سما means, it became high. سموت اليه means, I raised my eye towards him. سمي means, competitor or contender for superiority, in eminence or glory or excellence; a like or an equal; a namesake of another. هو سميك means, he is thy namesake or he is thy equal or like. (Aqrab & Lane)

Commentary :

The two words غلام and يحيى used in this verse are very significant. The word غلام signifies three periods of one's life *i. e.* childhood, youth and middle age. Applied to Yahyā or John it embodied a prophecy that he shall not die in childhood but shall grow up to be a young man before the eyes of his father and shall live up to middle age and so it actually came to pass. Yahyā lived up to middle age and then was killed by the order of Herod to satisfy the wish of a dancing girl. The word يحيى literally meaning, "he lives" or "he shall live," also implied a great prophecy, *viz.*, that he will die the death of a martyr and thus will become immortalized. Of the martyrs the Qur'ān says: *Say not of those who are killed in the cause of Allah that they are dead; nay they are living ; only you perceive not* (2 : 155). Again it says: *Think not of those who have been slain in the cause of Allah as dead. Nay, they are living in the presence of their Lord*

and are granted gifts from Him (3 : 170). Thus those who are killed in the way of God get everlasting life and so did Yahyā or John. His ministry terminated in his imprisonment in the fortress of Machaerus, where he was executed by the order of Herod Antipas (Matt. 14 : 10 & 11). See also 3 : 40.

The words, *We have not made anyone before him of that name*, do not mean that there had lived before him no man whose name was John. From the Bible it appears that there had been several persons before him who were called John. (II Kings 25 : 23 ; I Chronicles 3 : 15; Ezra 8 : 12). Nor does the verse mean that John was peerless and was unequalled in every respect. He himself confesses that "there cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (Mark 1 : 7). The verse only signifies that in some respects Yahyā had no equal, *i. e.* he enjoyed a partial superiority in some respects over other Israelite Prophets. Abraham, Moses and Jesus were Prophets of much higher spiritual status than John, the Baptist, who had come only to prepare the way for Jesus (Mark 1 : 3). Yahyā was peerless only in this respect that he was the first Prophet to come as a precursor and harbinger to another Prophet—Jesus. And he was peerless in this respect also that he was the first Prophet who came with the power and spirit of another Prophet—Elias.

9. He said, 'My Lord, how shall I have a son when ^amy wife is barren, and I have reached *the extreme limit of old age*? ²¹⁵³

قَالَ رَبِّ اَنۡى يَكُونُ لِىٓ غُلَامٌ وَّكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِى عَاقِرًا
وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ۝٩

10. *The angel bearing the revelation* said, ^b"So it is. But thy Lord says, 'it is easy for Me, and indeed I created thee before, when thou wast nothing.' ²¹⁵⁴

قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلٰى هٰٓىٔنَ وَقَدْ
خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبۡلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ۝١٠

^a 3 : 41; 21 : 91. ^b 3 : 41, 48 ; 19 : 22 ; 51 : 31.

2153. Important Words :

عتيا (extreme limit) is derived from عتا which means, he behaved proudly and was immoderate and inordinate; he was excessively proud or corrupt; he became advanced in age. عتت الريح means, the wind blew fiercely. The Quranic expression وقد بلغت من الكبر عتيا means, And I have reached the extreme degree of old age, or hardness and dryness in the joints and the bones like dry wood. The word also signifies that state of extreme old age which is incurable (Mufradāt, Lane & Aqrab).

The word غلام as stated above (v.8) implied that Zachariah would see his son grow before his eyes and that he would also be able to train and educate him. The glad tidings was indeed a source of great comfort but at the same time it was a surprise for a man who had reached such an advanced old age as Zachariah.

The words, "*How shall I have a son,*" do not express despair. V.5 above shows that Zachariah had not despaired of God's mercy. On the contrary he had perfect faith in the power of God to grant him a son. Moreover, a true believer never despairs of God's mercy. "None despairs of Allah's mercy save the unbelieving people," says the Qur'ān (12 : 88). The verse only expresses Zachariah's innocent and spon-

taneous surprise at the greatness of the favour which God was about to bestow upon him. Every person situated as Zachariah was would be naturally surprised at the unusual glad tidings that he had received.

2154. Commentary :

The words, *and indeed I created thee before, when thou wast nothing*, primarily refer to the spiritual creation of Zachariah rather than to his physical creation. There seems to be no point in referring to an ordinary everyday physical phenomenon of the creation of one individual. If God had intended to refer to the phenomenon of physical creation, He would have referred to the creation of the whole universe and not to the creation of Zachariah alone. In fact, the present verse is an answer to the surprise of Zachariah expressed in the previous verses. Zachariah was promised the birth of a son in his extreme old age. The son was not to be an ordinary one but was to be possessed of great spiritual powers and to be peerless in respect of certain spiritual qualities. So the reference here is to the spiritual birth of Zachariah and to his great moral qualities.

The word "he" in the expression "he said," refers to the angel who brought the glad tidings to Zachariah. In verse 8 Zachariah is mentioned

11. He said, 'My Lord appoint for me a token.' *God* said, 'Thy token is that thou shalt not speak to the people for "three full days and nights."²¹⁵⁵

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّي آيَةً قَالَ آيُكَ إِلَّا تُكَلِّمَ
النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ۝

^a 3 : 42.

as having been addressed by God; in the present verse, however, he is described as having been addressed by one angel while in 3 : 40 it is stated that several angels called to him. These three statements seem to be mutually contradictory and the critics of Islam like Wherry have not failed to represent this fact as such. But in reality there is no such contradiction. According to the Qur'ān when a Divine revelation of exceptional importance descends upon a Prophet of God, a number of angels, in accordance with the nature of its importance, are made to accompany it for its safeguarding (35:2) but only one angel representing all of them and on their behalf is entrusted with the duty to convey the Divine revelation to the Prophet. Thus the speaking of one angel means the speaking of all of them and therefore to say that one or many angels spoke to a Prophet makes no difference. Similarly, there is no contradiction in the words "God said" or "the angels said", because angels only speak to a Prophet as God's representatives and as His servants convey to him the Divine Message.

2155. Important Words :

آية (token). They say آيا آية i.e. he put or set up a sign, token or mark by which a person or thing might be known. آية means, a sign, token or mark by which a person or thing is known, a message or communication sent from one person to another; a person or individual; a whole company of people; a verse or a Chapter of the Qur'ān; a miracle, an evidence

or a proof; an example or a warning; a Divine commandment (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 2 : 130.

سويا is derived from سوي (sawwa) which again is derived from سوي (sawiya) which means, it became straight and even and rightly set. سواه (sawwa) means, he made it equal, uniform, even. سوي (sawiyun) means, equal, symmetrical, smooth and even; straight; whole; in good condition. غلام سوي means, a young man uniform in make or symmetrical, without disease and without fault or defect (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Zachariah beseeches God to appoint for him a token or to give him a commandment (the word آية also meaning 'a commandment' as given under "Important Words" above) by acting upon which he might give palpable expression to his feeling of extreme gratefulness for the most unusual favour God has bestowed upon him.

The commandment enjoining upon Zachariah to abstain from talking and to devote himself fully to the remembrance and glorification of God was a spiritual measure calculated to recuperate his exhausted physical powers. He had not become deprived of his power of speech, as the Gospels seem to suggest, as a punishment for his not believing in the words of God (Luke 1 : 20—22). See also 3 : 42.

In view of the meaning of the word سوي given under "Important Words" above, the verse,

12. Then he came forth unto his people from the chamber and asked them in a low voice "to glorify God morning and evening."²¹⁵⁶

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْحُرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ

أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ۝١٢

13. 'O Yahyā, hold fast the Book'. And We gave him wisdom while yet a child,²¹⁵⁷

يُوحِي خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ

صَبِيًّا ۝١٣

^a 3 : 42 ; 33 : 43.

besides the meaning given in the text, also signifies that Zachariah was commanded by God not to speak to his people for three days and nights while he was without any defect or disease and was in perfect state of health. The very word سَوِيًّا used in this verse about Zachariah contradicts the Biblical statement of his having been struck dumb.

2156. Important Words :

اَوْحَى (asked in a low voice) is derived from اَوْحَى. They say اَوْحَى إِلَى فُلَانٍ or اَوْحَى اَوْحَى i.e. he communicated to him or gave order or made a request by gesture or sign ; he talked to him in secret or he talked to him in such a way that others may not hear him; اَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ means, God sent revelation to him. The real sense of اَوْحَى (wahy) which is inf. noun from اَوْحَى (wahā) is to convey one's intention or wish by means of quick signs which may be done by gesture, writing, etc. They say اَوْحَى الْعَمَلُ i.e. he did the thing quickly. اَوْحَى الدَّوَاءُ الْمَوْتَ means, medicine precipitated his death (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 112.

For محراب (chamber) see 3 : 38.

Commentary :

When Zachariah was commanded by God not to speak to his people for three consecutive nights, he made up his mind to devote himself fully and completely to the remembrance of God.

During this time when he had to speak to anyone he spoke so low as to be heard only by those very near him. In 3 : 42 the word رَمَزًا has been used to express the same sense, for رَمَزَ means to communicate by means of movements of the lips and not to use one's throat. So the Qur'ān repudiates the Biblical suggestion that Zachariah was struck dumb. What actually happened was that he told his people in very low tones that he had been commanded by God to remember and glorify Him and that they should also do the same and not disturb him.

2157. Commentary :

The words, *hold fast the Book*, show that till the time of Yahyā the Torah had not been abrogated nor was it about to be abrogated in the very near future. By the word "Book" is here meant the Torah because neither Muslims nor Jews nor Christians believe that Yahyā was given a Book containing a new Law. Jesus had received baptism from Yahyā (John) and it is inconceivable that the two Prophets—John and Jesus—who lived at the same time, one (John) should have acted upon the Law of Torah and the other (Jesus) who was John's disciple and had been baptised by him should have been given a new Book and a new Law. Indeed both John and Jesus followed the Law of Moses and none of them brought any new Book.

14. And tenderness of heart from Ourselves, and purity, and he was pious²¹⁵⁸.

15. ^aAnd dutiful toward his parents. And he was not haughty and rebellious.²¹⁵⁹

16. ^bAnd peace was on him the day he was born, and the day he died, and peace there will be on him the day he will be raised up to life again.²¹⁶⁰

وَحَنَانًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ۝۳

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ۝۴

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ ۝۵

حَيًّا ۝۶

^a 6 : 152; 19 : 33 ; 29 : 9 ; 31 : 15 ; 46 : 16. ^b 19 : 34.

2158. Important Words :

حَنَانًا (tenderness of heart) is derived from حَن which means, he was or became affected with a yearning or an intense emotion of grief or of joy. حَنَ إِلَيْهِ قَلْبِي means, my heart yearned towards him. حَنَانًا means, mercy, compassion or pity; tenderness of heart. A Muslim would pray حَنَانَكَ يَا رَبَّ i.e. I beg Thy mercy, O Lord (Aqrab & Lane).

زَكَاةً (purity) is infinitive-noun from زَكَى which means, it increased or augmented; it throve by the blessing of God. زَكَى الْغُلَامُ means, the boy grew and throve; he was or became good or righteous and pure from sin; he enjoyed or led a pleasant, plentiful or an easy life. The difference between زَكَاةً (purity) and تَقْوَى (piety) is that whereas the former word means internal purity, the latter generally signifies protection against external evils (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

2159. Important Words :

بَرًّا (dutiful) is derived from بَرَّ (barra). بَرَّ بِرِ means, he treated or behaved towards his father with filial piety, duty or obedience. بَرَّ خَالَتَهُ means, he obeyed his Creator. بَرَّ فِي يَمِينِهِ means, he was true in his oath. بَرَّ عَمَلَهُ means, his work was good or well-performed. بَرَّ اللَّهُ means, God accepted his pilgrimage. بَرَّ (barrun) of which the plural is اِبْرَارٌ and بَرَّةٌ therefore means, pious, obedient, dutiful,

kind, good or affectionate. البار (barr) and البر (barr) both signify abounding in بر (birr), البر having greater intensification than البار and is one of the attributes of God meaning, the Merciful; the Compassionate God (Aqrab & Lane).

2160. Commentary :

During the first few centuries of its life Islam made very rapid progress. Large numbers of people from every religion—especially from Christianity, entered its fold. They brought with them some very erroneous beliefs about Jesus Christ. As they had not imbibed fully the true spirit of Islamic teachings, their false ideas and beliefs subsequently found their way into Muslim religious literature with the result that they came to form part of the beliefs of Muslims. All these beliefs had been invented to invest Jesus with an extraordinary personality—a personality much above human level. It is these foolish beliefs about Jesus that the Qur'ān seeks to demolish in the present Sūra. By instituting a comparison between Yaḥyā, who was a Prophet of an ordinary spiritual stature, and Jesus, it means to suggest that there was nothing in Jesus which distinguished him from other Divine Messengers. We give below some of the spiritual qualities and characteristics of both these Prophets as given in the Qur'ān to establish the above fact.

About Jesus it is said that :

1. He was a Prophet of God (3 : 50).
2. He was of the righteous (3 : 47).
3. God taught him the Book and the wisdom (3 : 49).
4. He talked to people as a child *i.e.* in rather early age (3 : 47).
5. He was granted nearness to God (3 : 46).
6. He was kind and dutiful to his mother (19 : 33).
7. He was kind of heart and compassionate (5 : 119).
8. He was not haughty and unblessed (19 : 33).
9. He was blessed by God and was strengthened with the spirit of holiness (2 : 254; 19 : 32).
10. Divine peace enveloped him (19 : 34).

11. His name Messiah was given to him by God (3 : 46).

About Yahyā it is said that :

1. He was a Prophet (3 : 40).
2. He was noble, chaste and a Prophet from among the righteous (3 : 40).
3. God gave him the Book and granted him wisdom (19 : 13).
4. God gave him wisdom while yet a child (19 : 13).
5. God was well pleased with him (19 : 7).
6. He was kind and dutiful to his parents (19 : 15).
7. He was kind-hearted, pure and pious (19 : 14).
8. He was not haughty and rebellious (19 : 15).
9. God was pleased with him and he was unequalled in some respects (19 : 7-8).
10. Divine peace enveloped him (19 : 16).

11. His name Yahyā was given to him by God (19 : 8).

By instituting this comparison we should not be understood to mean that Jesus and John were of absolutely equal spiritual standing and there was nothing to distinguish one from the other. Jesus did indeed possess a higher spiritual status than John. What the Qur'ān wants to make clear is the fact that there was nothing in Jesus which should raise him to the pedestal of Divinity. He was no doubt a great Prophet of God and was immune from sin but so were all other Divine Messengers, John being one of them. About him Jesus says : "For I say unto you, among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John, the Baptist" (Luke 7 : 28).

The verse should not be understood to signify that Prophet Yahyā was not murdered but died a natural death, a view mistakenly held in certain quarters, because it runs counter to an established fact of history. The words "peace was on him" used in the verse seem to have given rise to this manifestly wrong view but they lend no support to it. The word "peace" has not been used in a physical but a spiritual sense. In fact the verse refers to three periods or states of man's life. The first state begins with his birth and ends with his death. The second state which is called *برزخ (barzakh)*, literally meaning 'the period of earning merit or demerit is over', commences with death and continues till doom. The third state has been called "The Day of Resurrection" in the Qur'ān. It is the day of the complete manifestation of God's glory. It is these three states or periods of man's existence to which the present verse refers and in all of which, it says, Yahyā will enjoy spiritual peace.

- R. 2 17. And relate *the story of Mary as mentioned* in the Book. When she withdrew from her people to a place to the east.²¹⁶¹

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا
مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ۝١٧

2161. Important Words :

مَرْيَمَ (Mary) is probably a compound word consisting of مَر and يَم and possesses, in Hebrew, a variety of meanings. Some of these meanings are: 'bitter sea'; 'drop of the sea'; 'star of the sea'; 'bitterness'; 'mistress or lady'. The word also means 'exalted'. It may also mean 'pious worshipper'. From two alternative roots the word might also mean, 'the rebellious', or 'the corpulent'. It seems that among the Jews and the Arabs corpulence was considered as a mark of beauty and girls who were corpulent were considered beautiful and therefore named Maryam. Maryam also seems to be a popular name among the Jews in the time of Jesus. See also 3 : 37.

شَرْقِيًّا (to the east) means, (1) facing the east; (2) to the east. مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا means, a place to the east; a place facing the east; a place in which the sun shines; an open dwelling place (Lane).

الْكِتَاب (the Book) may refer both to the Bible and the Qur'ān.

Commentary :

It seems relevant and necessary to mention, as a prelude to the somewhat detailed account of Jesus's fatherless birth as given in the next several verses, some facts related about Mary in the Qur'ān and the Bible.

The New Testament sheds practically no light on the life of Mary before she became pregnant. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give an extremely brief and discursive description of her circumstances before the above

important event took place while Mark and John are completely silent over it. According to Matthew, Mary, on being married to Joseph, was found to be with child. Joseph intended secretly to put her away but was refrained from taking this extreme step by an angel saying to him in a dream : "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife" (Matt. 1 : 19, 20). According to Luke Mary was a relation of Zachariah's wife and used to go to their house. Apart from this unimportant additional fact Luke leaves us quite in the dark about Mary's account prior to her marriage with Joseph. But the Qur'ān gives us a much more detailed account of Mary's family, the circumstances that attended her birth, the vow of her mother, her childhood being dedicated to the service of the Church and lastly of her having conceived Jesus (3 : 36, 37, 38).

The present *Sūra*, however, gives a still more detailed account of Mary having conceived Jesus and of what happened to her and to Jesus after his birth and after he was commissioned with his Divine mission. The Qur'ān has provided us with all necessary details about Mary that have any bearing on the important subject of prophethood which was about to be transferred from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael and which forms the principal thesis of the present *Sūra*. If anything the Bible has given a very sorry picture of Jesus and his relations with his mother. Whereas the Qur'ān depicts him to be kind, dutiful and very compassionate towards his mother, the Gospels show

that he did not like his mother because she did not believe in him (Matt. 12 : 46-50). Mark 3 : 31-35 and Luke 8 : 19-21 show that besides Mary, Jesus's other relations did not believe in him while the Gospel of John keeps discreetly silent over this painful subject. We also know that the Jews used to taunt Jesus by saying that if his mission was true why his own relations did not believe in him (Matt. 13 : 55-56). Some of his relations and friends went so far as to lay hold on him for they said that he was beside himself (Mark 3 : 21). This attitude of disbelief on the part of his relatives towards Jesus had made him so bitter that when he was being taken to Calvary to be put on the Cross and his mother appeared on the scene, he addressed her saying 'Woman, behold thy son!' (John 19 : 26). And when on another occasion a woman being very much impressed by his discourse said: 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked' (Luke 11 : 27), he retorted: 'Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it' (Luke 11 : 28), which signified that he could not even bear his mother being praised.

Such is the picture which the Gospels have drawn of the unenviable relations between Jesus and his mother. But the description is not only self-contradictory, it also offends against human nature and intelligence. The Qur'ān, however, presents both these blessed and holy persons in quite a different light. Regarding Jesus it says that he was kind and loving, obedient and dutiful to his mother and that he was not haughty and rude (19 : 33) while about Mary it states that she was a pious, chaste and truthful woman and

was a great worshipper of God and that God purified her, accepted her and chose her above the women of the world (3 : 43, 44 ; 5 : 76 ; 66 : 13). How great is the difference between the unenviable picture of Mary drawn by the Gospels and the beautiful description given of her in the Qur'ān. Whereas the Biblical description is highly derogatory and self-contradictory, the Quranic description is not only consistent with the dignity of a highly righteous woman but is also more akin to truth and facts of history.

As the verse shows Mary withdrew herself to a place to the east. Special mention has been made of "a place to the east" in the verse, in order, perhaps, to point to the time-honoured custom of the Jews that they attached special significance to *مشرق* (East) and considered it sacred. They believed that the birth of the first man took place in the East where God planted a garden. (Gen. 2 : 8). The Babylonians by whose traditions the Jews became much impressed as they had lived under them as captives also looked upon the East as "the gate of light" (Ezekiel 11 : 1). Matthew 2 : 2 and Revelation 7 : 2 also shed some light on the importance of the East. Both the Jews and Christians hold the East in special respect. They build their places of worship facing the East. This is why special mention has been made in the present verse "of a place to the East" and Mary has been described as having gone to "a place which was facing the East."

For a somewhat detailed note on the early life of Mary see vv. 3 : 36, 37, 38.

18. And screened herself off from them, then We sent Our "angel to her, and he appeared to her in the form of a perfect man.²¹⁶²

19. She said, 'I seek refuge with the Gracious *God* from thee if indeed thou dost fear *Him*.'²¹⁶³

فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا
رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ۝

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ۝

° 3 : 43

2162. Important Words :

روحنا (Our angel). For the different meanings of the word روح see 2 : 88; 4 : 172 & 16 : 3.

Commentary :

The expression فتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا signifies that the Divine glad tidings about the birth of a great son was conveyed to Mary not in the form of spoken words which she could hear or which flowed from her mouth. The revelation to her took the form of a dream or vision. She saw in a vision that an angel came to her in the form of a healthy man and conveyed to her the Divine Message about the birth of a son. In fact, it is the word of God which at the time of revelation takes different forms and which when it came to Mary took the form of a man appearing in a dream. So it was no spirit that had entered Mary's body. The vision was but a manifestation of God's great power.

Christians try to derive a false satisfaction from the words روحنا alleging that according to the Qur'ān Divine Spirit or God Himself had entered Mary's body and that as a result thereof she became pregnant and therefore Jesus who was born as the result of that conception was the son of God. The Qur'ān lends no support whatsoever to this blasphemous and preposterous dogma but condemns and denounces it in the strongest possible terms (5 : 73-74; 19 : 89-91). What the verse says is only this that an angel of

God (روح means an angel) appeared to Mary in a vision in the form of a man and gave to her the glad tidings of the birth of a son.

Even the Gospels repudiate this fantastic dogma. According to them Mary had become conceived only of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1 : 18-20; Luke, 1 : 35). Thus according to Christians' own admission Jesus, at best, was the son of the Holy Ghost. But if they believe that he was the son of God then they shall also have to admit that the Holy Ghost is God. But they accept neither of these propositions. So whereas the Qur'ān strongly condemns and denounces the Christian dogma of sonship of Jesus, the Gospels too do not support it. What the Qur'ān says is simply this that an angel appeared before Mary in the form of a man and gave her from God the glad tidings of the birth of a great son.

2163. Commentary :

It is worthy of note here that the Divine attribute الرحمن (Gracious), has been repeatedly used in this *Sūra*. This *Sūra* deals with all the basic dogmas of Christianity and it is this attribute of God which cuts at the root of these false doctrines and demolishes them. If God is Gracious, then He can forgive the sins of His servants and if He can forgive their sins, then there is no need for anybody to give his blood in order to save mankind. As is apparent from the previous verse it was a mere vision that Mary had seen, and it generally happens

20. He replied, 'I am only a Messenger of thy Lord, that "I may bestow on thee a righteous son."²¹⁶⁴

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا
زَكِيًّا ۝٢٠

21. She said, ^b"How can I have a son when no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste?"²¹⁶⁵

قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ۝٢١

^a 3 : 46.

^b 3 : 48 ; 19 : 9.

that when a person sees a thing in a vision which he does not like in his waking state, he does not like it when he sees it in a vision. When Mary saw the angel standing before her in the form of a man she, being a virtuous young woman, was naturally frightened and perplexed as she would have been frightened and perplexed if she had seen him in her state of wakefulness and it is therefore quite natural that she sought Divine protection from him.

2164. Commentary :

The word 'Messenger' shows that the angel was only the bearer of a Divine message and the message or glad tidings which he brought was about the birth of a great son to Mary. So he had come not to give Mary a son but only the glad tidings about the birth of a son.

The expression لا هب لك only signifies that the angel had appeared to Mary to give her the certain and sure tidings about the birth of a son. The glad tidings was so certain of being fulfilled that it seemed as if the son had already been given to her. This is what the angel had conveyed to Mary because who does not know that it is God Who bestows a son and not an angel. An angel's mission is confined only to conveying the wish and decree of God.

2165. Commentary :

The incident referred to in this and the preceding verses took place in a vision, and in a vision

or dream a person experiences different kinds of sensations at different occasions. Sometimes his feelings and talk in the dream are subject to and under the effect of the dream that he sees while at another time they are not, and he feels and talks as he would feel and talk if he were awake. For example, if in a dream a person is glad over the death of his son, his feelings will be regarded as under the effect of the dream because in his state of wakefulness no sane person would be glad over the death of his son. So if the words spoken by Mary when she saw the angel in her vision were under the effect of the vision, then they would signify that when the glad tidings was given to her about the birth of a son she had a pleasant surprise whether God would work such a miracle as to give her—a virgin—a son. But if the words be regarded as a natural expression on her part when the tidings of the birth of a son was given to her then they would signify that she was completely perplexed and horror-struck at the thought that a son should be born to her—a virgin. In the former case hers would be a very pleasant surprise at the great favour that God was going to do her and in the latter case it would be an expression of bewilderment indicating the horrified state of her mind.

The words 'no man has touched me' show that Mary thought that the glad tidings about

22. "He replied, 'Thus *it is*'. But says thy Lord, 'It is easy for Me; and *We shall do so* that We may make him a Sign unto men, and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing decreed.' 2166

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبِّي هُوَ عَلَىٰ هَيْئَةٍ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً
لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ٢١٦٦

* 3 : 41, 48; 19 : 22; 51 : 31.

the birth of a son to her meant that the child would be born to her without contracting a regular marriage, otherwise there was no sense in her denying having known any man. The words, 'neither have I been unchaste' show that whereas in the previous clause she had denied having known any man lawfully *i.e.* in a married state, these words refer to her denial of having known any person unlawfully *i.e.* outside legal wedlock. In her reply to the angel she seemed to be thinking of the circumstances of her life in the Temple and of her vow of celibacy which obviated the possibility of her having any offspring. If she thought that the promise made in the preceding verse referred to the birth of a son as a result of her conjugal relations in some future time, as some Commentators of the Qur'ān think, then there was no occasion for her to express any surprise.

2166. Important Words :

مَقْضِيًّا (decreed) is derived from قَضَى. They say قَضَى أَمْرًا *i.e.* he decreed or ordained or commanded the thing (Lane). See also 15 : 67.

Commentary :

The words, *It is easy for Me*, signify that a most unusual and apparently impossible thing such as to cause a child to be born without the instrumentality of a father is quite easy for God to bring about. The expression, *that We may make him a Sign unto men*, implies the fatherless birth of Jesus. That birth was indeed a great Sign for the Israelites. It pointed to

the impending transition of prophethood from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael. It also constituted a warning to the Israelites in the sense that they had become spiritually so corrupt and morally so degenerate that no male among them was fit enough to become the father of a Prophet of God. So God decreed to bring about Jesus's birth independently of a father. Jesus had an Israelite mother only and had no father. As the final step in the process of transition, however, the Great and Noble Messenger who was to follow him was to have neither an Israelite father nor an Israelite mother. He was to appear from another people, from among the Ishmaelites, the brethren of Israelites, in accordance with the Divine promise made to Moses (Deut. 18 : 18). It is in this sense that Jesus has been spoken of as 'a Sign of the Hour' in the Qur'ān (43 : 62), *i.e.*, a Sign of the time when prophethood was to have passed from the Israelites to the Ishmaelites. See also Introduction to this *Sūra*.

Jesus has also been spoken of 'as a mercy from Us.' He was a mercy from God in the sense that he taught meekness and humility to the Jews who had become hardhearted and conceited to the core. He was also a mercy in the sense that he came as a forerunner of the Holy Prophet who himself 'was sent as a mercy for all the worlds' (21 : 108). Again Jesus was a Divine mercy inasmuch as he paved the way for the revelation of the Qur'ān which has also been referred to as 'a mercy from the Lord' (29 : 52; 43 : 33). But this use of

23. So she conceived him, and withdrew with him to a remote place.²¹⁶⁷

نَحَلَتْهُ فَأَنْتَبَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ۝٣٣

the words, 'That We may make him a Sign unto men and a mercy from Us' should not be understood to entitle Jesus to any special spiritual status. Other persons and Prophets of God have also been styled 'as a mercy and a Sign from God' in the Qur'ān (2 : 260; 7 : 74; 10 : 93; 21 : 108).

The expression, *and it is a thing decreed*, means that God had decreed that a fatherless son would be born to Mary and that this Divine decree was irrevocable. The Qur'ān has used two words *قدر* and *قضا* to express the sense of Divine decree. They are sometimes erroneously taken one for the other. But while *قدر* means designing or determining, *قضى* means decreeing. When a scheme or plan is only designed to be put into execution, it is called *قدر* but when it is decreed by God that it should be carried into actual effect, it is named *قضاء*. The fatherless birth of Jesus was a *قضاء* (Divine decree) of God and not a *قدر*.

2167. Important Words:

انتبذت (she withdrew) is derived from *نَبَذَ*. They say *نَبَذَهُ* i.e. he cast, threw or flung it away. *انتبذ* means, he withdrew or retired aside or apart from others; separated himself from others. *انتبذ عن القوم* means, he withdrew or retired from his people. *انتبذ مكاناً قصياً* means, he retired to a place from his family; he retired to a distant place from his people (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

How Mary came to conceive Jesus without the agency of a husband is one of those Divine secrets which at present may be considered beyond human intellect to fathom. It may be regarded as above the ordinary natural law as we now know it. But the knowledge of man, at best, is

limited. He has not been able to comprehend all Divine secrets. There are mysteries in nature which man has not been able to solve as yet; perhaps he may never be able to solve them. Among them may be included the fatherless birth of Jesus. God's ways are inscrutable and His powers limitless. He Who could create the whole universe by uttering the word, *كُنْ* (be), surely can bring about such changes in matter as should make this apparently insoluble mystery yield to a solution.

Medical Science, however, has not altogether ruled out the possibility, from a purely biological standpoint, under certain conditions, of natural parthenogenesis or the production of a child by a female without any relation to a male. Medical men call attention to this possibility as a result of a certain type of tumours, which are occasionally found in the female pelvis or lower body. These tumours which are known as arrhenoblastoma are capable of generating male sperm-cells. If living male sperm-cells are produced in a female body by arrhenoblastoma the possibility of self-fertilization of a woman, even though virgin, cannot be denied. That is to say, her own body would produce the same result as though sperm-cells from a man's body had been transferred to hers in the usual way, or by a physician's aid. Recently a group of gynaecologists in Europe have published data to prove instances of child birth where the mother had had no contact with a male (Lancet). For a detailed note on parthenogenesis see 3 : 48.

Jesus's birth is perhaps not altogether unique in this respect that he was born without the agency of a human father. Cases are on record

24. And the pains of childbirth drove her unto the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, 'O! would that I had died before this and had become a thing quite forgotten!'²¹⁶⁸

فَاجَاءَهَا الدَّخَاضُ إِلَى جَنْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ
يَلَيَّتَنِي مِثُّ قَبْلِ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مِّنْ نَّسِيَّاتٍ ۝٢٤

of children having been born without fathers for which see Enc. Brit. under "Virgin Birth" and "Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine" published by W. B. Saunders & Co., London.

If we dismiss all these possibilities, then Jesus's birth will have to be regarded, God forbid, as illegitimate. Christians and Jews are both agreed that the birth of Jesus was something out of the ordinary—the Christians holding it as supernatural and the Jews as illegitimate (Jew. Enc.). Even in the family birth register, the birth of Jesus was recorded as such (Talmud). This fact alone should constitute a valid proof of Jesus's birth being out of the ordinary. Joseph, Mary's husband, according to the Gospels, had not established conjugal relations with her till after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1 : 25). So the words, 'she conceived him', refer to this extraordinary conception of Mary without the agency of any man.

The words, 'a remote place', refer to Bethlehem which is about seventy miles from Nazareth to the south. There Joseph took Mary sometime before Jesus's birth which took place in that town.

2168. Important Words :

مَخَاض (pains of childbirth) is derived from مَخَض . They say مَخَضَ اللَّيْنِ i.e. he churned the milk and took the butter out of it. مَخَضَ الشَّيْءِ means, he violently agitated the thing. مَخَضَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ means, the woman suffered the

pains of childbirth. مَخَاض means, the pains of childbirth (Lane & Aqrab).

مَنْسِيًّا (a thing forgotten) is derived from نَسَى الشَّيْءَ (nasiya). نَسَى means, he forgot the thing. نَسِيًّا means, anything forgotten or worthy of being forgotten or anything that must be forgotten. It also means, one who is counted for nothing, who is despised; a thing which the members of a caravan leave behind as worthless or of little use or importance. مَنْسِيًّا also means, a thing that is forgotten or neglected. The use of these two words together in this verse denoting the same sense is intended to intensify the sense of forgetting or neglect (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As it appears from the Gospels there was no room in the inn in which Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary must have stayed in the open field and Mary might have betaken herself to the trunk of a palm-tree in order to take rest under its shade and possibly also to find some support in her throes of childbirth.

The words, 'had become a thing quite forgotten' indicate the extreme severity of the pains of childbirth. In the case of first delivery the throes of childbirth ordinarily are extremely severe and in the intensity of pain women generally give utterance to some such words as those spoken by Mary.

25. Then he (the angel) called her from beneath her, *saying*, "Grieve not. Thy Lord has placed a rivulet below thee,"²¹⁶⁹

26. "And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will cause fresh ripe dates to fall upon thee,"²¹⁷⁰

فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ
تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ۝
وَهَزَبْنِي إِلَيْكَ بِجُذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا
جَنِينًا ۝

2169. Important Words :

تحتها (beneath her). تحت means, beneath, below or under; the lower part. The word also signifies the low, base, vile or ignoble or depressed persons. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said لا تقوم الساعة حتى تظهر التحوت و تهلك الوعول i.e. the hour of Resurrection will not come until the low or depressed people prevail and the rich and high-placed persons perish; or as some say, until the treasures that are beneath the earth appear (Lane & Tāj).

The word تحت meaning beneath, below and also the slope and declivity of a mountain (Lane), the verse signifies that the voice came to Mary from the side of the slope of the mountain where the fountain was and not from beneath her own body as is popularly believed. As a matter of fact Bethlehem is situated on a rock 2350 ft. above sea-level and is surrounded by very fertile valleys. There are fountains in this rock, one of which is known as the 'fountain of Solomon'. Another fountain is situated at a distance of about 800 yards to the south-east of the town. From these fountains water is supplied to the town of Bethlehem. The words of the verse only mean that the angel called to Mary from the side of the fountain which was situated in the slope (تحت) of the mountain.

Mary stood in need of water for drinking and for washing herself and the swaddling-clothes.

So the voice of the angel indicated to her the direction where the fountain lay. One of the fountains was flowing at a distance of about 800 yards to the south-east of Bethlehem and Joseph and Mary, we are told, finding no accommodation in the town had to lie in the open field at some distance from the town.

The verse seems to point to a beautiful likeness which Jesus had with another Prophet of God—Ishmael. We are told that when Ishmael suffered from extreme pangs of thirst in the wilderness of Mecca and his mother Hagar in vain searched for water, the voice of the angel came to her saying that God had caused a fountain of water to flow from under the feet of Ishmael (Bukhārī). The verse thus entitles Jesus to no particular distinction. Apart from the fatherless birth of Jesus the significance of which has been fully explained in the Introduction to the present *Sūra*, Jesus possesses no distinction. He was only one of so many Divine Messengers.

2170. Commentary :

According to this verse the birth of Jesus took place at a time when fresh dates are found on palm-trees in Judaea. That season evidently is in the months of August and September but according to the view generally accepted by Christians, Jesus was born on 25th December which day is celebrated all over the Christian world every year with great fervour. Now this Christian view is contradicted not only by the Qur'ān but also by history and even

by writers of the New Testament itself. Writing about the time of Jesus's birth Luke says: "And there were shepherds in the same country (Judaea) abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock's (Luke 2 : 7, 8). Commenting on this statement of Luke Bishop Barns in his book, *Rise of Christianity*, on page 79 says: "There is, moreover, no authority for the belief that December 25 was the actual birthday of Jesus. If we can give any credence to the birth-story of Luke, with the shepherds keeping watch by night in the fields near Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus did not take place in winter, when the night temperature is so low in the hill country of Judaea that snow is not uncommon. After much argument our Christmas day seems to have been accepted about A.D. 300". This view of Bishop Barns is supported by writers of the articles on "Christmas" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Chambers Encyclopaedia*. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica* we have :

The exact day and year of Christ's birth have never been satisfactorily settled; but when the fathers of the Church in A.D. 340 decided upon a date to celebrate the event, they wisely chose the day of the winter solstice which was firmly fixed in the minds of the people and which was their most important festival. Owing to changes in man-made calendars, the time of the solstice and the date of Christmas day vary by a few days (15th edition, vol. 5, pp. 642 & 642A).

Chambers Encyclopaedia says:

In the second place the winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the sun, and at Rome 25th December was observed as a pagan festival of the nativity of Sol-invictus. The Church, unable to stamp out this popular festival, spiritualized it as the feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness.

These statements of the two *Encyclopaedias* are further supported by Peake's "Commentary on the Bible". In this book on page 727 Peake says: "The season (of Jesus's birth) would not be December; our Christmas day is a comparatively late tradition found first in the West." Thus recent historical research into the origins of Christianity has established the fact beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus was not born in December.

How in the light of historical research into the origins of Christianity and Luke's statement that Jesus was born at a time when "there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night" (Luke 2 : 7-8) the belief ever came to be entertained by Christians that Jesus was born in December, seems very surprising indeed. According to this statement of Luke Jesus certainly was born in summer when shepherds abide in the field in Judaea, keeping watch over their flocks at night which is only possible in summer. The incident referred to in Luke very probably took place in the month of August or September when fresh dates are found on palm-trees in Judaea. This is the time when according to the Quranic verse under comment Jesus was born and when his mother Mary was directed by God to "shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will cause fresh dates to fall upon thee". Thus the Gospel of Luke inadvertently has lent wonderful support to the Quranic view about the birth of Jesus having taken place in the month of August or September which is the season of fresh ripe dates in Judaea. Moreover, there is ample and very reliable historical evidence also to show that Jesus was born in the month of August or September. In his "Dictionary of the Bible" Dr. John D. Davis, under the word "year" writes that dates become ripe in

the Jewish month of Elul; and in Peake's "Commentary on the Bible" (page 117) we have that the month of Elul corresponds to the months of August-September. Furthermore Dr. Peake says, "J. Stewart (*When did our Lord actually live?*) arguing from an Angora temple inscription and a quotation in an old Chinese classic which speaks of the Gospel story reaching China A.D. 25-28 puts the birth of Jesus in 8 B.C. (Sept. or Oct.) and the crucifixion on Wednesday in A.D. 24."

From the above statements of the two Encyclopaedias supported by quotations from the "Commentary on the Bible" by Dr. Arthur S. Peake, M.A., D.D., the fact becomes quite clear that Jesus was born in the Jewish month of Elul which corresponds to the months of August-September when dates ripen in Judaea, and not on 25th December as the Christian Church would have us believe. And that is the view expressed by the Qur'ān.

One more fact in this connection demands careful examination. Some time before Jesus's birth Joseph had taken Mary to Bethlehem, a town about seventy miles to the south of Nazareth, the native place of Joseph and Mary. Luke states that Joseph did so because with Quirinius as governor of Syria, Augustus Caesar had ordered that all should go to Bethlehem to be enrolled in the city of David (Luke 2 : 1-4). But history does not support this statement of Luke. No census was ever taken in the year of Jesus's birth nor was there any governor of Syria of this name at that time. According to Josephus, one of the greatest of all Jewish historians, the first census ever to be taken was held seven years after Jesus's birth and the governors of Syria ten years before his birth till Herod's death were Stiprus Wardus, Sentiris and Titnis (Enc. Brit. under "Chronicle").

It seems incredible that in the face of such reliable historical evidence Luke should have invented this story of the census. There must have been some very compelling reasons for him to do so. It appears that in a desperate search for an excuse to explain why Joseph and Mary undertook such a long and arduous journey to Bethlehem in the latter's extremely weak state of health and her pregnancy, Luke seems to have stumbled over the fact of a census having taken place in that town which, in fact, had been held seven years after the date that he has assigned to it. He deliberately predated the census by seven years in order to show that both the events—the census and Jesus's birth, took place at the same time. Writing history about seventy or eighty years after the actual event he perhaps thought that this historical anachronism would not be detected after such a long time. Thus by placing the census, which had occurred seven years later, in the year of Jesus's birth Luke persuaded himself to believe that he had succeeded in explaining away the fact as to why Joseph had exposed his ailing wife to the rigours of a long and hard journey to Bethlehem in the advanced state of her pregnancy.

But the difficulty still remains that if, as history shows, there had been no census at the time of Jesus's birth, then why Luke was so anxious to invent the whole story of the journey to Bethlehem and why it was undertaken. In fact the difficulty was of Luke's own creation. It was this, that while narrating the account of the immaculate conception of Mary he had stated that great and wonderful miracles had begun and had continued to appear till Jesus's birth. He feared that if no valid reason were given of this journey of Joseph and Mary, then they would be legitimately accused of being weak

of faith and people would naturally say that after having witnessed so many miracles at the time of the conception they were still afraid of public criticism and scandal-mongering and that in order to hide the fact of conception and later birth they had left Nazareth. But the hard reality was there that they had undertaken the journey to Bethlehem, a far-off place. Luke probably thought that people would rightly ask that if immediately after the conception miracles and Divine Signs had really begun to appear, then where was the necessity for Joseph to conceal Mary's pregnancy and the subsequent birth of Jesus, and if there existed no such necessity why did Joseph and Mary undertake that hard and fatiguing journey in the state of her extremely delicate health? Thus the invention of great miracles having taken place at the time of the conception forced Luke to forge the event of the census and also the story that he had undertaken the journey to Bethlehem in order to attend it. But he need not have invented or predated the fact of the census. The whole thing was quite simple and could have been easily explained. Luke could easily have written that Mary had miraculously conceived a child while in the Temple and was afterwards married to Joseph who himself was quite convinced of her chastity as he had seen a vision to that effect (see 3 : 47). But because he feared that he would not be able to convince others of this fact, and because he was afraid of scandal-mongering on the part of the people, therefore, he had to take Mary to a far off place before her pregnancy had become too patent to be concealed any longer. But this he would not do because in that case the whole story of great miracles having attended Mary's conception would have gone to pieces. This is how the whole difficulty arose and one invention led to another.

It may be added here that the whole

trouble of fixing the date of Jesus's birth seems to have arisen from a confusion of the date of Mary's conception. The pregnancy of Mary seemed to have taken place sometime in November or December and not in March or April as the Church historians would have us believe. When after four or five months' conception pregnancy became too obvious to be concealed any longer, Joseph was prevailed upon to take Mary to his house in the month of March or April of the next year. Thus Christian historians mistake the date when Joseph took Mary to his house for the date of her actual conception which had taken place four or five months earlier. As recent research into the origins of Christianity has proved that Jesus was not born in December but in August-September, therefore the conception could not have taken place in March or April. So the Quranic view that Jesus was born in August or September is based not only on historical facts but is also quite in accordance with Luke's own narrative and therefore is the only safe and sensible conclusion.

It also appears from the present verse that Mary was lying in a sheltered place in the upper part of the hill and the date-palm was standing on the slope and therefore she could easily reach to its trunk and shake it. That the territory of Bethlehem abounded in date-palms is clear from the Bible (Judges 1 : 16) and from "A Dictionary of the Bible" by Dr. John D. Davis, D.D.

Moreover, the fact of Mary having been guided to a fountain, as mentioned in the preceding verse, in order to drink of its water and wash herself, points to Jesus's birth having taken place in the month of August or September because in the icy cold weather of Judaea in December Mary could not have washed herself in the open.

27. "So eat and drink and cool *thine* eye. And if thou seest any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to the Gracious God; I will therefore not speak this day to any human being.'" 2171

فَكُلْ وَاشْرَبْ وَقَرِّ عَيْنًا فَمَا تَرَيْنَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ
أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ
الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ٢١

28. Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, 'O Mary, thou hast done a strange thing' 2172

فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ
شَيْئًا قَرِيًّا ٢٢

2171. Commentary :

Some Commentators of the Qur'ān are of the view that Mary was commanded completely to abstain from talking. But that is not the case. Like Zachariah she was directed to abstain from talk as far as possible, but not completely, and to devote all her time in the remembrance of God. The expression *فَقُولِي* (and say) itself shows that the command about abstaining from talk was not unqualified. A new baby had been born and as the birth of a new child was likely to attract the casual visitor or the passerby and induce him to ask the mother unnecessary and vexatious questions about its parentage etc.; so in order to cut short the possible embarrassing conversation Mary was commanded to say that she had vowed a fast to the Gracious God that she would indulge in no useless talk. Thus while on the one hand her silence conserved her physical strength, on the other she could have more time to devote to the remembrance of God.

2172. Important Words :

جِئْتَ (thou hast done). *جاء زيد* means, Zaid came. *جِئْتُ زيدا* means, I came to Zaid. *جِئْتُ بِهِ* means, I brought him. *جاءت بولد* means, she gave birth to a child. *جاء بشي* means, he did, executed or performed a thing; he said or

uttered a thing. *جِئْتُ شَيْئًا حَسَنًا* means, I did a good thing. The Quranic expression. *لَقَدْ جِئْتُ شَيْئًا قَرِيًّا* means, thou hast done a strange thing or a thing hitherto unknown (Lane & Aqrab).

قَرِيًّا (strange) is derived from *فَرَى* (*fariya*) which means, he was or became confounded or perplexed, and was unable to see the right course. *أَفَرَى فَلَانًا* means, he blamed or censured such a one; *أَفَرَى الشَّيْءَ* means, he cut or slit the thing. They say *يَفَرَى الْفَرَى* *i.e.* he effects what is wonderful in his deed. *فَرَى* means, a thing forged or fabricated or unknown or unheard of. The words *لَقَدْ جِئْتُ شَيْئًا قَرِيًّا* mean, thou hast done a thing hitherto unknown; or a thing deemed strange; or a thing great of magnitude or gravity. *فَرَى* applied to a man means, a forger or fabricator of lies. *أَفْتَرَى كَذِبًا* means, he forged or fabricated a lie or falsehood (Lane & Aqrab).

تَحْمِلُهُ (carrying him) is derived from *حَمَلَ*. They say *حَمَلَ الشَّيْءَ* *i.e.* he carried the thing. *حَمَلَهُ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ* means, he bore him on his or its back. *حَمَلَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ* means, the woman became pregnant. *حَمَلَ الْقُرْآنَ* means, he memorized the Qur'ān. *حَمَلَهُ الْحَمْلَ* means, he helped him or assisted him to lift the load; or he assisted him in his work; he gave him a beast to ride; *لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ* (9 : 92) means, that thou

shouldst mount them (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 7 : 177.

Commentary :

By the words 'carrying him' some people are led to think that the verse refers to the time of the childhood of Jesus when Mary carried him in her arms. But this is an obvious misconception. The verse, in fact, refers to the time when Jesus had attained to prophethood as is clear from vv. 31-34 wherein he says, *I am a servant of Allah, He has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet;...and has enjoined upon me Prayer and alms-giving so long as I live.* Surely Jesus was not made a Prophet in his childhood, nor did he say his Prayers and give Zakāt at that time. It appears from the Gospels that after Jesus's birth at Bethlehem, in pursuance of a Divine command Joseph had taken him and Mary to Egypt where they lived for some years and it was after the death of Herod that the family came back to Nazareth and dwelt there (Matt. 2 : 13-23). There was also a Biblical prophecy to the effect that Jesus would come to his people along with his mother riding an ass (Matt. 21:4-7). Jesus and Mary were actually riding asses when they entered Jerusalem. Thus the expression *تحمله* (carrying him or mounting him) may possibly refer to that prophecy of the Bible.

Moreover the expression *حمله* as shown under "Important Words" above, also means, he helped him and assisted him in his work. According to this signification of the word *حمل* the verse under comment would mean that Mary came to her people with Jesus while she believed in him and helped him in his mission. The expression serves a two-fold pur-

pose. On the one hand it refers to the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy (Matt. 21 : 4-7) and on the other disposes of the accusation (also contained in the Bible) that Jesus's brothers and his mother did not believe in him. In any case this verse does not refer to the childhood of Jesus but to the time when prophethood had already been bestowed upon him and he had begun addressing his Message to his people.

The manner of expression adopted in regard to the birth and prophethood of Jesus is quite like that adopted about John (Yaḥyā) in verses 12th and 13th of the present *Sūra*. Verse 12 relates to Zachariah having received the happy news of the birth of a son and v. 13 to the period when his son Yaḥyā had become a Prophet, the remaining incidents in Yaḥyā's life having been omitted because the Qur'ān is not a book of history that it should give the complete picture of the life of a man. In the same way the preceding three verses give a brief description of Jesus's birth and the present verse comes straight to the time when he had become a Prophet of God. The fact that v. 23 speaks of Mary having withdrawn to a remote place also belies the inference that she had come from that remote place carrying Jesus in her arms.

The words, 'thou hast done a strange thing' contain a double taunt. They refer to the calumny of Mary having given birth to an illegitimate son and to Jesus having falsely laid claim to prophethood. As shown under "Important Words" above the word *فرى* also means a forger of lies. Thus by using this word the elders of the Jewish people called Mary a bad woman and Jesus a forger of lies and a false Prophet.

29. 'O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man nor was thy mother an unchaste woman!' ²¹⁷³

30. Then she pointed to him. They said, 'how can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' ²¹⁷⁴

يَاخَتَ هُرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ
أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا ۝٢٩

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي
الْهَدْيِ صَبِيًّا ۝٣٠

2173. Commentary :

Some Christian writers in their ignorance of the Arabic language have accused the Qur'ān of an historical anachronism inasmuch as it has spoken of Mary as "sister of Aaron". Instead of regretting their own ignorance they seek to find fault with the Qur'ān. The question of Mary having been called the sister of Aaron in the Qur'ān was put before the Holy Prophet himself and he asked the questioner if he did not know that the Israelites used to name their children after their Prophets and saints (Bayān, vol. 6, p. 16; Jarir vol. 16, p. 52).

Mary has been here called the sister of Aaron and not that of Moses though both were brothers, for whereas Moses was the founder of the Jewish Law, Aaron was the head of the Jewish priestly class (Enc. Bib. & Enc. Brit. under "Aaron") and Mary also belonged to the priestly order. Tabarī has related an incident from the life of the Holy Prophet which gives an insight into the meanings of the Arabic words اب (ab), عم ('amm), اخت (ukht) etc. When Şafīyyah, the Holy Prophet's wife, and incidentally a Jewess by descent, once complained to the Holy Prophet that some of his other wives had called her a Jewess in contempt, the Prophet told her to return the taunt by saying that Aaron was her father, Moses her uncle and Muḥammad her husband. Now, the Holy Prophet certainly knew that Aaron was not Şafīyyah's

father nor Moses her uncle. This tradition shows that the application of these Arabic words is by no means confined to the above-mentioned blood relations.

Mary might have been called a sister of Aaron by way of reproach or taunt inasmuch as another Mary, the real sister of Aaron and Moses's step-sister or his sister-in-law, had charged him (Moses) with having unlawfully married a woman (Numbers 12 : 1). A reference to this accusation is also to be found in the Qur'ān in 33 : 70. Thus the elders of the Jews, by calling Jesus's mother "sister of Aaron," meant that as Mary the sister of Aaron had, by accusing Moses of unlawfully marrying a woman, committed a heinous crime, so did she, like her namesake, commit a heinous act of giving birth to an illegitimate child. See also 3 : 36.

2174. Important Words :

For المهد see 3 : 47.

Commentary :

The words 'she pointed to him' indicate that Mary knew what answer Jesus would give if the elders of the Jews addressed their question to him. These words may also indicate that Mary knew that if she declared herself innocent nobody would believe her. The only evidence of her innocence was her son. She meant that such a holy and righteous son whom God had endowed with such noble qualities could not be the result of an immoral union and that his

virtues and good qualities by themselves constituted a sufficient vindication of her innocence. So she pointed to him.

The words may also signify that when the Jews accused Mary of adultery she felt embarrassed and pointed to Jesus who had by that time become a Prophet. Some Muslim Commentators of the Qur'ān seem to feel a peculiar delight in attributing all sorts of miracles to Jesus. By their misguided esteem for him they have virtually raised him to the pedestal of Divinity. In the words, *How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle*, they seem to have discovered one such miracle of Jesus. Among all men, even among all the great Prophets of God, he alone, they say, could talk while yet a child in the cradle. But the talk which he gave to the elders of the Jews and which is contained in the next four verses (vv. 31-34) could not possibly be the talk of a child. If it was, then the facts described therein were a tissue of lies. Jesus says: (a) "God has made me a Prophet"; (b) "He has given me the Book"; (c) "He has enjoined me to say Prayers and give the Zakāt"; (d) "He has made me dutiful to my mother and has not made me haughty", and (e) "Peace was on me the day I was born, and peace there will be on me the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised up to life again." All these affirmations from the lips of a child sound like so many lies and who would call these lies a miracle? Jesus was neither a Prophet at that time, nor did he say Prayer or give Zakāt or was given a Book. Moreover, these Commentators appear to ignore the quite obvious fact that at another place in the Qur'ān (3 : 47) this miracle is stated as having

consisted in Jesus's speaking to the people in the cradle and when of middle age (في المهد و كهل). But talk by a man when he is كهل i.e. of middle age, is no miracle ; and by joining the word مهد (cradle) with the word كهل (of middle age), the Qur'ān implies that the talk of Jesus in مهد and when he was كهل (of middle age) was no miracle in the sense in which it is understood by the Commentators, but it was a miracle in the sense that he spoke words of exceptional wisdom and intelligence in childhood as well as in middle age. The joining of these two words also implied a prophecy that Jesus would not die young but would live up to a ripe age. This prophecy did constitute a real miracle. But if the word مهد were to be taken in the sense of "period of preparation" which is also one of the meanings of this word, the verse يكلم الناس في المهد (3:47) would mean that he would speak to people words full of extraordinary wisdom and spiritual knowledge much beyond his years and experience, both in the period of preparation which is youth and in his middle age. Thus the words, *How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle*, present no difficulty. When Mary, on being taunted by the elders of the Jews, directed their attention to Jesus, they disdained to talk to him and contemptuously said, how could they talk to "a child in the cradle" i.e. a mere boy, who was born and brought up before their very eyes? Elderly people are wont to talk like that when invited to learn wisdom from one who is much younger to them in age. The words merely constitute an expression of contempt and disdain for Jesus. See also 3 : 47.

31. He said, 'I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet; ²¹⁷⁵

32. 'And He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined upon me Prayer and almsgiving so long as I live; ²¹⁷⁶

33. 'And He has made me "dutiful toward my mother, and He has not made me haughty and unblessed." ²¹⁷⁷

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أُتِنِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ۝

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ

وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ۝

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ۝

^a 19 : 15, 33.

2175. Commentary :

"The Book" refers to the Torah and the verse signifies that God had given Jesus a special knowledge of the Torah which was denied to the elders and learned men of the Jews.

2176. Commentary :

This verse implied a mighty prophecy. The prophecy was that Jesus's people would put him on the Cross and would compel him to flee his country and seek refuge in a foreign land. But the grace and blessings of God would attend him wherever he would go. After the crucifixion Jesus's mission appeared to have been a complete failure but he travelled to the East—to Afghanistan and Kashmir, where his cause prospered and triumphed. See also 4 : 158 & 23 : 51.

2177. Commentary :

The present and the preceding two verses refer to a period when Jesus had already become invested with prophethood. It is an insult to human intelligence and common-sense and to belie facts of history and also to betray one's utter lack of knowledge of the Quranic style and Arabic idiom to say that the words of vv. 31-33 were spoken by Jesus while he was yet a child and therefore constituted a great miracle. A mere

babe who sucked the breast of his mother could not say that he was a most obedient and faithful servant of God or that God had given him a Book or that he said Prayers and gave alms or that he was dutiful to his mother and was not haughty. All this talk seems to be a tissue of lies. Jesus could not and did not do any of these things while yet a child but rather when he had attained to prophethood. It may be argued that the miracle consisted in the fact that Jesus could talk while yet a baby in the cradle but this purpose could equally have been served by his speaking only a few words. If only he had rebuked the elders of the Jews for calumniating his mother in a single sentence they would surely have been taken aback and completely confounded and the purpose of the miracle would have been fully served. But where was the necessity of putting a long discourse in Jesus's mouth which was not true? The truth is that the miracle did not lie in the supposed infantile talk of Jesus but only in the imagination of the Commentators.

In this and the preceding two verses Jesus has been described as saying that (1) he is a servant of God; (2) God has given him the Book; (3) He has made him a Prophet; (4) He has made

him blessed ; (5) He has enjoined upon him Prayer and alms-giving ; (6) He has made him dutiful to his mother and that (7) He has not made him haughty and unblessed. All these words put in Jesus's mouth by the Qur'ān have been amply supported and corroborated by the Bible :

(1) As regards Jesus's being a humble servant of God, subject to human weaknesses and frailties and to the demands and calls of nature and not being God or son of God, the Bible says :

And when he had fasted forty days and nights, he afterwards hungered (Matt. 4 : 2).

But of that day or that hour knoweth no one,—but the father (Mark 13 : 32).

And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good ? None is good save one, *that is* God (Mark 10 : 18).

(2) About the fact that Jesus was given a Book which he followed and taught, the Bible says :

Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matt. 5 : 17, 18).

(3) The Bible also supports the Quranic statement that Jesus was only a Prophet of God and not God or the son of God, It says :

And He that sent me is with me (John 8 : 29).

Neither came I of myself, but He sent me (John 8 : 42).

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind (Isaiah 61 : 1-3 ; Luke 4 : 15-22).

And the multitudes said, This is the

Prophet, Jesus, of Nazareth of Galilee (Matt. 21 : 11).

(4) About Jesus's being blessed the Bible depicts Elizabeth, the mother of John, as saying to Mary, the mother of Jesus :

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb (Luke 1 : 42).

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked (Luke 11 : 27).

(5) Fifthly, the Qur'ān tells us about Jesus that God had enjoined upon him Prayer and alms-giving. About this the Bible says as follows :

And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed (Luke 5 : 16).

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22 : 44).

Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's (Matt. 22 : 21).

(6) Last of all Jesus has been described as being humble and blessed with success. In regard to this the Bible says :

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11 : 29).

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sittin gupon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (Matt. 21 : 5).

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world (John 16 : 33).

34. 'And peace was on me "the day I was born, and *peace there will be on me* the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised up to life *again*."²¹⁷⁸

35. Such was Jesus, son of Mary. *This is a statement of the truth about which they doubt.*²¹⁷⁹

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ

أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٤﴾

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ

يَتَنَزَّلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a 19 : 16.

2178. Commentary :

The words, *and peace there will be on me the day I shall die*, show that Jesus did not die on the Cross, for death on the Cross, according to the Bible, is an accursed death (Deut. 21 : 23; Gal. 3:13). It cannot be said about a person who died an accursed death that he died a blessed and peaceful death. But the mere fact of a person being put on the Cross or meeting a violent end does not conflict with the idea of peace and blessedness to which this verse refers. It is an accepted fact of history that the Prophet Yahyā was murdered while in jail but the words "peace was on him the day he died" have also been used about him in v. 16 above. So these words have been used about Jesus and Yahyā to show that both these Prophets succeeded in their missions, and a person who succeeds in his mission and whose work is carried on after his death and who is remembered with love and respect cannot be said to have suffered death or to have been deprived of "peace". Jesus has left behind him a large community of followers and Yahyā's name is remembered with love and respect. Thus both Jesus and Yahyā died a blessed death and enjoy everlasting peace.

The words "peace was on me the day I was born" may also be understood as containing a hint that the birth of Jesus was out of the ordinary. These words have also been used about

Yahyā in verse 16 above because his birth, too, took place in extraordinary circumstances. He was born when his father had reached an extremely old age and his mother was barren.

The expression, *the day I shall be raised up to life again*, may also imply: "The day when I shall be raised again in the form of another Prophet who will testify to my truth." The implied reference may be to the Holy Prophet who bore witness to the truth of Jesus.

2179. Commentary :

Perhaps there is no individual of any prominence in religious history about whom so many and so far-reaching differences exist as about Jesus, the son of Mary. The Jews, the Christians and the Muslims all hold widely different views about Jesus's birth, the manner of his death, and about the account of his life. The Jews believe that he was born out of legal wedlock and therefore his birth was illegitimate. He was a false Prophet and therefore deservedly met an accursed death on the Cross. The Christians hold that Jesus's mother became conceived of the Holy Ghost, therefore he was the son of God. He persuaded himself to be put on the Cross and by his death he atoned for the sins of all humanity. He remained dead for three days and then rose up to heaven. He is a part of the Holy Trinity and yet is God Himself. Orthodox

36. "It does not befit *the Majesty of Allah* to take unto Himself a son. Holy is He. When He decrees a thing, He says to it, 'Be!' and it is."²¹⁸⁰

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَنَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ
أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٦﴾

* 10: 69 ; 17 : 112; 18 : 5; 19: 89; 21: 27; 25: 3; 39 : 5.

Muslims believe that he was miraculously born without the instrumentality of a father as the result of a special Divine decree. He was an Israelite Prophet. The Jews tried to crucify him but instead succeeded only in crucifying another person who by God's special decree was made to look like Jesus and Jesus bodily went up to heaven where he is sitting by the right hand of God and will some day descend from heaven to win for Muslims the kingdom of the whole world. The so-called modernists among Muslims think that he was the son of Joseph the carpenter, and died a natural death, and so there was nothing miraculous or unusual about his birth, death or his life. He was only an Israelite Prophet. The orthodox Ahmadis, however, believe that his birth took place without the agency of a father as the result of a special Divine decree, and that this unusual form of birth constituted a rebuke and a warning to the Israelites that on account of their persistent rejection of truth and God's Messengers, and their immoral practices the whole Israelite nation had been rendered quite unfit to give birth to a Prophet of God and therefore prophethood, in accordance with God's covenant with Abraham, was transferred from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael (see Introduction to this *Sūra*). They further believe that Jesus was hung on the Cross by the Jews but did not die there and was taken down from it alive and for three days remained in a tomb hewn out of a rock and then travelled to Kashmir to preach his Message to the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. He lived up

to the ripe old age of 120 years, died a natural death and lies buried in Khan Yar street in Srinagar, Kashmir. In fact, the existence of so many and so serious differences about Jesus implies a rebuke to Christians that there is nothing certain about their god.

The expression "son of Mary" (ابن مريم) is Jesus's distinctive name. Whereas on the one hand it seems to point to his fatherless birth, on the other it confers on him a name which is incapable of being confused with that of anybody else. The Gospels have also used for Jesus the epithet ابن آدم (son of man) but this epithet has been used in the Bible for other persons also. So ابن مريم (son of Mary) is at once a distinctive and descriptive name of Jesus.

2180. Important Words :

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ (It does not befit the Majesty of Allah). They say مَا كَانَ لَهُ i.e. (1) it does not befit him; behave him; it is inconsistent with his dignity; it is not proper for him; (2) it is beyond his power to do so. In the present verse مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ means, it is inconsistent with the Majesty of Allah or it does not befit His Holiness (Aqrah, Lane & Mufradāt). See also 2 : 35.

Commentary :

The words ان يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ express two senses : (a) that He should have a son; and (b) that He should adopt some one as His son. When it is inconsistent with God's Majesty to adopt someone as His son, it is all the more repugnant to His Holiness and Glory to have a real son. These words repudiate the Christian belief, namely (i) that God has adopted Jesus as His son or

(ii) that Jesus is God's son.

Christians believe that Jesus was God's son. The onus for proving such a manifestly absurd belief lies on them. They base this belief on the assumption that the Bible calls him the son of God. But in the Bible other persons have also been called or addressed as sons of God. Jesus enjoys no special prerogative in this respect and is therefore no more a son of God than those persons who have also been addressed as such.

The Bible says :

- (a) "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God" (Luke 20 : 36);
- (b) "For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn" (Jer. 31 : 9);
- (c) "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6 : 9);
- (d) "For if you forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6 : 14) ;
- (e) "That your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11 : 25);
- (f) "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Luke 12 : 30) ;
- (g) "We have one Father, even God" (John 8 : 41);
- (h) "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephes. 4 : 6);
- (i) "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Exod. 4 : 22).

The Bible rather supports the Quranic statement, viz., *it does not befit the Majesty of Allah to take unto Himself a son*. He is the One Lord God Who has or needs no son.

It says :

- (a) "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6 : 4) ;

- (b) "I am the Lord, that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isa. 42 : 8);
- (c) "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12 : 29);
- (d) "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty" (Jude 1 : 25);
- (e) "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever" (I Timothy 1 : 17).

The verse under comment gives three reasons why God does not stand in need of a son: (1) if God were supposed to have a son, He must be subject to carnal desires and must have a wife to satisfy them; (2) He must be subject to decay and death because the procreation of species which the attribution of a son to God implies, is the characteristic of mortals ; and (3) He must require a helper to assist Him in His work or to continue his work after His death. But God as represented by Islam is completely free from all these defects and therefore needs no son. In fact, the Christian dogma of sonship of Jesus is an insoluble riddle and beyond human comprehension. If Jesus is God's son, then God will have to be admitted as incapable of carrying on the affairs of the universe alone and unaided, and therefore will have to be accepted as imperfect and defective. But because God is perfect and All-Powerful, therefore He needs no son and no helper. Again, according to the Christian dogma each of the three deities, God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being perfect can and should carry on the work of the universe unaided and yet these three combine to do the thing which each one is able to accomplish by himself. This is absurd.

Those who are ignorant of Arabic language pretend to find in the word **كن** (be) a

37. Said Jesus : 'Surely, "Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him *alone*, this is the right path.'

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ

مُسْتَقِيمٌ ٣٧

38. But the parties differed among themselves; so ^bwoe to those who disbelieve, because of the meeting of the great day.²¹⁸¹

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ

كَفَرُوا مِنْ مَّشْهَدٍ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ٣٨

a 3 : 52; 5 : 73 ; 43 : 65. b 14 : 3; 38 : 28; 51 : 61.

ground for their belief in the eternity and indestructibility of matter and soul. They argue in this way. This word shows that there had already existed something to which the order كن (be) was given. But in the Arabic language this word, besides being addressed to a thing, is also used to express a greatly felt desire. In an expedition the Holy Prophet's very brave and loyal Companion, Abū Khaithama happened to be absent. The Prophet keenly felt his absence. When in the midst of the battle he saw from a great distance a rider coming to him at full speed he exclaimed *كن ابا خيثمة* i.e. would that it were Abū Khaithama ; and lo! it was really Abū Khaithama (Halbiyya). So an Arab would use the word *كن* when he would passionately desire a thing to happen.

According to this sense of *كن* the expression *كن فيكون* would mean that when God desires or intends that a thing should be, it comes into being or that when God expresses a desire it takes a concrete form. The words lend no support to the view that soul and matter are primeval or eternal. See also 2: 117-118.

2181. Important Words :

الحزاب (parties) is the plural of حزب which means, a party or group of men; a party of men

who agree in their ideas and actions (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that in spite of the fact that the followers of Jesus followed one Book, held the same *basic* beliefs and their religious practices were almost the same, they differed among themselves. Some of them said that Mary was an ordinary woman who gave birth to the son of God, others believed that she was God's wife and was therefore Divine. Yet some others among them believed that Jesus was only a man and a Prophet of God. He had, like other Prophets, manifested in himself some Divine attributes, and there were others who said that he was God Incarnate. Some others believed in three separate Divine persons i.e. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, each of them being perfect God; others said that they are only three manifestations of the One God i.e. in one capacity God is Father, in another capacity He is Son and in the third capacity He is the Holy Ghost.

So the followers of Jesus, inspite of believing in the same Book and possessing the same *basic* doctrines and principles of religion became split up into many sects.

39. How wonderful will their hearing and seeing be on the day when they will come to Us! But to-day the wrongdoers are in manifest error. ²¹⁸²

40. And warn them of "the day of grief when the matter will be decided. But *now* they are in a *state of* carelessness, so they do not believe. ²¹⁸³

41. ^bIt is We Who will inherit the earth and *all* who are thereon; and to Us will they all be returned. ²¹⁸⁴

أَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصُرْ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَكِنِ الظَّالِمُونَ

الْيَوْمَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ

فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَإِلَيْنَا

يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

^a 2 : 168 ; 6 : 32 ; 39 : 57. ^b 15 : 24 ; 28 : 59.

2182. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the faculties of seeing and hearing of disbelievers will become much more keener and sharper on the Day of Judgment, because the veil will be lifted from their eyes and ears and they will realize that they were in the wrong; but that realization being too late will prove to be of no use to them.

2183. Commentary :

The words *اذ قضي الامر* means, (1) when the decree of God will be announced; (2) when decision will be made according to truth and justice.

The expression *وهم لا يؤمنون* in addition to the meaning given in the text may also signify that though on the Day of Decision the realization will dawn on disbelievers that they were in the wrong, yet having become accustomed to untruth and disbelief, they will not become reconciled to it and their hearts will continue to suffer from the rust, and they will continue to wander in the wilderness, of disbelief and consequently will suffer Divine punishment.

2184. Commentary :

As the *Sūra* deals with the false Christian beliefs and the rise, progress and prosperity of Christian nations, and with the ultimate destruction of their material might and power the word *الارض* (the earth) here signifies the vast parts of the world over which they will hold sway; and the expression *من عليها* (who are thereon) points to the large numbers of Christian people who at that time will be inhabiting the earth and dominating it.

The verse embodies two prophecies: (a) the Christians will first come to rule over almost the whole earth, and will be dominating it by their large numbers, and (b) then as a result of their disbelief they will be deprived of their world dominion which will ultimately be given to the followers of Islam. It points to the present great material power and grandeur of Christian nations and their subsequent destruction and to the ultimate spread and triumph of Islam. The words, *And to Us will they all be returned*, signify that Western Christian nations will ultimately accept Islam.

- R.3 42. "And relate the story of Abraham as mentioned in the Book. He was a truthful man and a Prophet."²¹⁸⁵

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا
نَبِيًّا ﴿٢١٨٥﴾

a 38 : 46; 53 : 38.

2185. **Commentary :**

ابراهيم (Abraham) means the father of nations. Originally Abraham's name was ابرام (Abram) which may have been derived from ابرم. They say: ابرمه *i.e.* he twisted it (the rope) well. He made it firm, strong, solid (Lane). Abraham might have been so called because he was endowed to an unusual degree with conversational ability of a high mark. He was an irresistible debater. His talk was very effective and his arguments strong. A reference to this quality of Abraham is to be found in 2 : 259 and 6 : 76-81. Or Abram may have come to be called Abraham after God had made His covenant with him and had promised to multiply him exceedingly. God said: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen. 17:4-5). In the Qur'ān also Abraham has been called امة which means, "a nation", "a people", "a race" (16 : 121).

Abraham was a native of Ur of the Chaldees in Iraq. His people worshipped the sun and the stars. Their chief god was Merodach or (Mad-ruk). It was also called Bel, *i.e.* Lord (Enc. Bib.).

Abraham was a great iconoclast. He preached the Unity and Oneness of God and strongly denounced and condemned idol-worship. By his iconoclastic activities he incurred the enmity of his father and so with his wife and his nephew Lot he had to leave his native place for Canaan which land God had promised to give to

his seed (Gen 12 : 7). When Canaan suffered from a severe famine Abraham left it for Egypt where he married Hagar, the mother of Ishmael. For a detailed account of Abraham see 6 : 75.

الكتاب (the Book) in this verse means the Qur'ān. The Holy Prophet is here directed to relate the story of Abraham as it is given in the Qur'ān and not as it is related in the Bible. While the Qur'ān depicts Abraham as a truthful man the Bible accuses him of telling lies (Gen. 20 : 13).

صديق (a truthful man) is the intensified form of صادق which is active participle from صادق which means, he spoke the truth (Lane). صادق means one who speaks the truth. صديق being the intensive form of صادق has four meanings; (a) one who very generally and often speaks the truth; (b) one who never tells a lie; (c) one who is so habituated to speaking truth that it becomes impossible for him to tell a lie; and (d) one who is truthful in his talk and substantiates the truth of his talk and beliefs by his actions and deeds. The speaking of truth becomes, as it were, a part of his being, a second nature with him (Lane). This is the highest stage of صديقيت (the quality or condition of being truthful).

The word صديق possesses a double connotation. While on the one hand it means one who is highly truthful, on the other it denotes a spiritual rank next only to the rank of prophethood. In fact, every quality possesses two connotations and two uses. It is used as an attribute and it also expresses a rank. In

the present verse صديق has been used to express only the attribute and quality of truthfulness and not the rank of صديق which is included in the rank of نبي (a Prophet) which has also been mentioned in regard to Abraham in this verse. The verse means that Abraham was a Prophet of God and one of his most prominent and distinctive qualities was that he was truthful *par excellence*.

The Qur'ān has laid great stress on the truthfulness of Abraham perhaps because in some future time lies were to be attributed to him by some Commentators of the Qur'ān.

It seems appropriate and pertinent to write here a few words about the order and arrangement of the verses of the present *Sūra* because some Christian writers have found fault with the chronological order of the incidents mentioned in it. In fact the central theme of this *Sūra* is to disprove and demolish the Christian dogma of godhead of Jesus Christ. The *Sūra* opens with a brief mention of Zachariah, the father of Yaḥyā who was a fore-runner of Jesus. Zachariah's mention is followed by a concise description of the birth of Yaḥyā. Then a somewhat detailed description is given of the birth of Jesus who was the harbinger of the Holy Prophet and light is shed on the falsity of Christian beliefs and doctrines about him and his mother. This description of Jesus is followed by a narration of some important incidents in the life of Abraham. This seems to be a historical anachronism but in reality it is not. The Qur'ān is not a book of history. It sometimes deliberately departs from the chronological order of events. The account of Abraham given in the present and the following verses is a case in point. The account of Jesus is followed by that of Abraham in order to drive home the point that when Abraham, the great progenitor

of Moses who was the Founder of the Mosaic Dispensation of which Christianity is only an offshoot, was a firm believer in the Unity of God, how could Jesus depart from the Faith of his forefather, and claim to be God or son of God? Secondly, God had made a promise with Abraham that He would multiply him exceedingly through his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. God's promise with Abraham was fulfilled first through Isaac, and then when Isaac's progeny disobeyed and defied Divine commandments and consistently rejected Divine Prophets and went so far as to kill John and crucify Jesus, God's covenant with Abraham became transferred to Ishmael and was finally and fully fulfilled through the latter's progeny. This is the real reason why the account of Jesus is followed by that of Abraham. After this a brief mention is made of Moses who was a descendant of Jacob and in whom God's covenant with Abraham through Isaac found its highest fulfilment. After dealing with God's covenant with Abraham through Isaac, the *Sūra* proceeds to make a mention of the Divine promise with Abraham through Ishmael. This is why after Moses mention has been made of Ishmael and this is the significance of the order which the Qur'ān has kept in view while giving an account of the life of some Prophets and making only a brief mention of others and this is the right and natural order which should have been observed while dealing with the subject under discussion. The taunt of some Christian critics of Islam that the seeming historical anachronism was due to the Holy Prophet's lack of the knowledge of history is absurd because elsewhere (Chapter Hūd) the Qur'ān has given the accounts of some Prophets of very remote past in their proper chronological order which fact has been admitted by fair-minded Christian writers themselves.

43. When he said to his father, "O my father, why dost thou worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor can avail thee aught?"²¹⁸⁶

44. 'O my father, there has indeed come to me knowledge such as has not come to thee; so follow me, I will guide thee to an even path;

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ

وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٢١٨٦﴾

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ

فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٢١٨٧﴾

^a 6 : 76 ; 21 : 53; 26 : 71; 37 : 86-87.

2186. Important Words :

اب (father) which originally was ابو means, a father; a grandfather; an ancestor; a paternal uncle. ابوالمرأة means, the woman's husband. اب in reality is ابي (my father). According to Arabic usage ي has been converted into ت (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The point whether Abraham's اب (ab) whose name at another place in the Qur'ān (6 : 75) has been given as Āzar was his father, uncle or grandfather, is much in dispute. In 2 : 134 Ishmael who was Jacob's uncle has been spoken of as his اب (ab). Whether Āzar was Abraham's father or uncle does not possess much significance. From a study of all relevant historical facts, however, we are inclined to the view that Āzar was Abraham's father, though according to some Talmudic traditions Abraham's father had died while he was young and he was left an orphan.

In Genesis (11 : 26) Abraham's father's name has been given as Terah while Luke (3 : 34) gives it as Thara. The Talmud agrees with Luke and says that his name was Thara. It also gives his name as Zarah. Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, however, gives Athar as the name of the great Patriarch's father (Sale). This shows that even among the Jews there existed no unani-

mity of views as to the name of Abraham's father. The fact that Eusebius followed neither Genesis (11 : 26) nor (Luke 3 : 34) indicates that he had very strong reasons to differ from these two well-known sources. The two names, Athar of Eusebius and Āzar of the Qur'ān closely resemble each other. The Quranic version is therefore much more reliable and akin to reality than that of the Bible. See also 6 : 75.

The attributes "All-Hearing" and "All-Seeing" are among the most important Divine attributes. It is our conviction that God sees us when we are in trouble and hears our prayers when we pray to Him which is really at the root of our belief in God. If once we cease to believe in these two attributes, we cease to believe in God. But these two attributes are here further complemented by a third—the attribute غنى which means, One Who has no need of others and is Self-Sufficient but Whose help others need and upon Whom they are dependent. If God is not غنى and cannot come to our help when we need it, then His attributes "All-Seeing" and "All-Hearing" are of no use. Abraham has indeed adduced a most convincing and unassailable argument against idol-worship, viz., if the idols do neither see when their votaries are in trouble, nor hear their prayers when they call on them, nor do they come to their help when they need it, then what sense or purpose there is in worshipping such useless things?

45. 'O my father, "worship not Satan; surely Satan is a rebel against the Gracious God ;²¹⁸⁷

46. 'O my father, indeed I fear lest a punishment from the Gracious God seize thee and thou become a comrade of Satan.'²¹⁸⁸

يَا بَتِّ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ

عَصِيًّا ۝

يَا بَتِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ

فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ۝

^a 6 : 143; 24 : 22 ; 36 : 61.

2187. Commentary :

عبادة which is noun-infinitive from the verb عبد does not consist only in prostrating before God or an idol, but also signifies, blindly or unthinkingly following a person or accepting an idea or belief without subjecting it to sane and searching criticism. This significance of the word is clear from the verse itself, because nobody has ever been seen to worship Satan in the sense that he prostrates before him and prays to him. It also appears from this verse that the word شيطان (Satan) here does not mean 'the Devil' or even the idols. Here it only signifies evil inclinations, wrong ideas and beliefs and bad associates and evil spirits. According to these meanings of the words عبادة and شيطان the verse would signify that one should not follow blindly or unthinkingly evil inclinations, wrong beliefs or bad friends or associates. Such an attitude on one's part is tantamount to giving them Divine status and to worshipping them.

The word عصيا (rebel) also indicates that شيطان in this verse does not signify idols made of wood or stone because idols of stone do not disobey God. From the previous verse one may have been led to think that Abraham had advised his father against idol-worship only. This verse belies that idea and indicates that he advised him also against blindly following

evil inclinations, wrong beliefs and association with evil persons. The word الشيطان (Satan) includes all these things.

2188. Commentary :

The linking of عذاب (punishment) with the Divine attribute الرحمن (the Gracious) in this and other verses of this *Sūra* appears to be somewhat incongruous and inconsistent. Punishment seems more appropriately related to God's other attributes such as الجبار (the Subduer), القهار (the Most Supreme), ذو انتقام (the Avenger) etc. In fact, every punishment is the result of the defiance or disobedience of a particular Divine attribute. Sometimes a person is punished because he defies the Divine attribute الغفار (the Great Forgiver), at another time punishment comes upon him because he disobeys the Divine attribute الكريم (Most Generous) and so on. In this verse, in fact in the whole *Sūra*, شرک i.e. idolatry, has been repeatedly denounced and condemned in the strongest and most scathing terms and the Divine attribute الرحمن i.e. the Gracious, has also been mentioned again and again because شرک (idolatry) in every shape and form is the direct result of denial of رحمانية i.e. Divine Grace. The two great idolatrous peoples—the Hindus and the Christians, have hopelessly fallen victim to the most degraded form of idolatry because they both deny رحمانية i.e. Divine Grace—the former

47. He replied, 'Dost thou turn away from my gods, O Abraham? 'If thou cease not, I shall surely cut off all relations with thee. Now leave me alone for a long while.'²¹⁸⁹

48. Abraham said, 'Peace be upon thee. 'I will ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee. He is indeed gracious to me.'²¹⁹⁰

قَالَ أَرَأَيْبُ أَنْتَ عَنْ إِلَهِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِنْ لَمْ
تَنْتَهِ لَا رَجُوتُكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مِلًّا ۝

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي
خَفِيًّا ۝

^a 21 : 69 ; 29 : 25 ; 37 : 98. ^b 9 : 114 ; 26 : 87 ; 60 : 5.

by believing in the indestructibility and eternity of matter and soul and the latter by subscribing to the foolish doctrine that salvation is impossible without Atonement. So the mentioning together of the Divine attribute الرحمن (the Gracious) and Divine punishment shows that it is not رحمانية i.e. Divine Grace, which is the cause of Divine punishment, rather it is its denial and rejection.

شیطان (Satan), as stated above, may signify man's evil inclinations and propensities, his bad friends and associates and evil spirits that cast their shadow upon him and lead him deeper and deeper into sin and transgression.

2189. Important Words :

لَارْجَمُكَ (I shall surely cut off all relations with thee) is derived from رَجَمَ. They say رَجَمَهُ i.e. he stoned him to death; he murdered him; he accused or slandered him; he cursed him; he abused him; he drove him away; he cut off all relations with him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 37.

مِلًّا (a long while). They say مِلًّا فلاناً i.e. I was made to live long with such a one. تَمَلَّى العيش means, he lived long. تَمَلَّى بشيئ means, he enjoyed a thing. مِلًّا means, a while or a long

time. مر ملي من الليل means, a large part of the night passed away. انتظره ملياً means, he waited for him for a long time (Aqrab).

Commentary :

All the different meanings of the word رَجَمَ, mentioned above, are applicable here. In spite of Abraham's talking to his father with affection and considerateness, the latter lost his temper and told him to go away from him and leave him alone. This is often the case with those who have no arguments but only physical force to prove their claim.

2190. Important Words :

خَفِيًّا (gracious) is derived from حَفِيَ (hafiya). They say حَفِيَ فلاناً i.e. he gave such a one. حَفَاهُ مِنْ الشَّيْءِ means, he refused to give him the thing. حَفِيَ بِهِ means, he honoured him; he showed him much honour and kindness and affection and regard for his circumstances; he behaved towards him with benevolence and solicitude and manifested joy. حَفِيَ عَنْهُ means, he asked or inquired much respecting him or it. حَفِيَ means, kind; gracious; affectionate; having much regard for another person's circumstances; going to the utmost in asking or inquiring etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 188.

49. 'And 'I shall keep away from you and from that which you call upon beside Allah; and I will pray unto my Lord; it may be that in praying to my Lord, I shall not be disappointed.'²¹⁹¹

50. So when he had separated himself from them and from that which they worshipped beside Allah, 'We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob and each of them We made a Prophet.'²¹⁹²

51. And We granted them *abundantly* of Our mercy; and 'We bestowed upon them a true and lasting renown.'²¹⁹³

وَاَعْتَزَلْتُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَاَدْعُوا
رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ اِلَّا اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ۝٤٩

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَهَبْنَا لَهُ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا
نَبِيًّا ۝٥٠

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ
صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ۝٥١

^a 29 : 27. ^b 14 : 40; 21 : 73. ^c 26 : 85.

2191. Commentary :

In this verse Abraham seems to be referring to his emigration to Canaan. It is on record that Abraham went from Iraq to Canaan and from there to Egypt. He left his father and people behind him in Iraq.

2192. Commentary :

Ishmael has not been mentioned here, though he was the eldest son of Abraham. This is done for two reasons : (1) Isaac and Jacob have been mentioned by the way only as subordinate Prophets while Ishmael has found a separate and independent mention in v. 55 below. This shows that Ishmael possessed a higher spiritual status than both Isaac and Jacob. (2) Ishmael has been mentioned after Moses because the latter was the greatest representative of the House of Isaac. As the result of repeated defiance of the commandments of God and rejection of His Messengers by the Jews prophethood became transferred from the House of Isaac or

Israel (or from the Mosaic Dispensation) to that of Ishmael, so mention has been made of him after Moses in v. 55 and that is the right place where he should have been mentioned.

2193. Important Words :

لسان (renown) is derived from لسن (*lasina*) which means, he was or became extremely eloquent or perspicuous in speech. لسن فلانا (*lasana*) means, he was more eloquent than such a one ; he got the better of him in speech. لسنه العقرب means, the scorpion bit him. لسان means, speech, tongue, style ; language ; information; news, tidings ; renown or reputation. لسان العرب means, the classical language of the Arabs. لسان القوم means, the spokesman of the people. لسان الصدق means, good or lasting reputation, renown or remembrance. When a noun is prefixed to the word صدق governing it in the genitive case, it gives the idea of everlastingness. عنب صدق means, a perfectly

- 4 52. And relate the story of Moses as mentioned in the Book. "He was, indeed, a chosen one; and he was a Messenger, a Prophet."²¹⁹⁴

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾

^a 33 : 70

delicious and liked grape, complete in all the qualities of the best kind (Lane & Aqrab).

عَلَا (high) is derived from علا. They say علا الشيئي i.e. the thing became high. علا الرجل means, he overcame the man and overpowered him. علا الدابة means, he rode the beast. علا في الارض means, he behaved proudly and insolently in the earth. علا في المكارم means, he acquired noble qualities. على ('aliyyun) means, high; noble; hard and firm (Aqrab & Lane). See also 4 : 35.

Commentary :

Divine mercy has two manifestations: (a) mercy shown to a person irrespective of the fact as to who he is and what his beliefs and actions are; (b) mercy shown by God to His beloved ones and the Elect on special occasions. The latter class of mercy may be called God's special mercy. The verse under comment speaks of this latter kind of mercy, meaning that God did not bestow upon Isaac and Jacob any particular favour out of His limitless and immeasurable mercy but made them, as it were, the very possessors of Divine mercy itself.

According to the different significations of the words صدق and لسان and على the words, *We bestowed on them a true and lasting renown*, would mean, (1) that they acquired good reputation and were to be remembered with respect, affection and love by their contemporaries and future generations; (2) that their talk was full of wisdom and intelligence and was free from all sort of bitterness, obscenity, falsehood and hatred; (3) that they were fearless in the expres-

sion of their beliefs and were hard upon disbelievers and untruthful persons; and (4) that their good works constituted and continued as so many monuments and memorials to their good name.

2194. Commentary :

The account of Abraham is followed by that of Moses—Isaac and Jacob having been mentioned only casually and by the way in v. 50 above. In Moses God's covenant with Abraham about the progeny of Isaac found its fullest and completest manifestation. The visible mark of this Divine covenant was the bestowal of Canaan on Abraham's progeny (Gen. 17:8) which took place in the time of Moses's Successor. The Israelite Prophets who came after Moses were only Reformer-Prophets who carried on and fulfilled his work and mission. This is why, after Moses, God adverts to His Promise to Abraham about Ishmael which saw its sublimest and most complete and perfect manifestation and consummation in the Holy Prophet of Islam who was a descendant of Ishmael.

The words, *he was a Messenger and a Prophet*, explain and remove a popular misconception. According to popular notion a رسول (Messenger) is one who brings a new Law and a new Book and a نبي (Prophet) is one who is commissioned by God only for the reformation of his people. He also receives Divine revelation but brings no Law or Book containing new commandments and ordinances. According to this popular notion every رسول (Messenger) is necessarily a نبي (Prophet) but not every

53. "And We called him from the right side of the Mount and We made him draw near to Us for special communion."²¹⁹⁵

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ
نَجِيًّا ۝

* 20 : 81; 28 : 31.

رسول a نبي. The verse under comment, however, demolishes this wrong notion because if a رسول (Messenger) is one who brings a new Book and a new Law and as such is necessarily a نبي (Prophet), then the addition of the word نبي to the word رسول in this and other verses is superfluous and redundant. In fact, every رسول is a نبي and every نبي a رسول. These two words represent two aspects of the same office and two functions of the same person. A Divine Reformer is a رسول inasmuch as he receives Messages from God (رسالت meaning a message) and he is a نبي in the sense that he conveys those Messages to the people to whom he is sent (نبوت meaning the conveying of a message). Thus every رسول (Messenger) is a نبي (Prophet) because after receiving Divine Messages he conveys them to his people and every نبي is a رسول because he conveys to his people those Messages which he receives from God. Only the functions of نبي follow those of رسول. In his capacity as رسول he first receives Messages from God and then in his capacity as نبي he conveys them to his people. This is why here and everywhere in the Qur'an when these two words—رسول and نبي occur together, invariably the word نبي follows the word رسول because that is the natural order. See also 7 : 158, 159 ; 19 : 31, 55. The bringing of a new Book or a new Law, therefore, is not the necessary concomitant of a نبي or a رسول. A رسول or a نبي may or may not bring

a new Law. All Messengers (رسول) and Prophets (نبي) are of two categories—(a) those that bring a new Book and a new Law and (b) those that do not. This classification of رسول and نبي into two categories is supported by the Qur'an itself. See 5 : 45.

2195. Important Words :

أيمن (right) is derived from يمين. They say يمين الله فلاناً i.e. God blessed such a one. أيمن means, (1) blessed ; (2) right as opposed to left (Aqrab). The word أيمن may qualify both جانب or الطور. For طور (Mount) see 2 : 64.

نجياً (for special communion) is derived from نجا. They say نجا الرجل i.e. he discoursed secrets with the man, or simply he discoursed with him. نجا الرجل means, he talked with the man in private, or he discoursed secretly with him. See also 4 : 115 & 12 : 81. نجياً means, one with whom secrets are discoursed or simply one who is discoursed or talked with. It also means, one who walks quickly. الناقة النجيه means, a quick-footed she-camel (Aqrab).

Commentary :

According to the two meanings of الأيمن given under "Important Words" above, the first part of the verse would mean : (a) We called him from the right side of the Mount; (b) We called him from the blessed side of the Mount; or (c) We called him from the side of the blessed Mount.

54. And We bestowed upon him, out of Our mercy, "his brother Aaron as a Prophet."²¹⁹⁶

55. And relate the story of Ishmael as mentioned in the Book. He was indeed strict in keeping his promise. And he was a Messenger, a Prophet.²¹⁹⁷

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ
وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾

^a 20 : 30, 31 ; 25 : 36 ; 28 : 36.

Taking into consideration all the three meanings of the word قربناه نجياً the expression would mean: (a) We drew him near to Us in order to hold a discourse with him, i.e. We selected him for Our special communion and for opening to him the avenues of Divine knowledge and secrets of the unknown; (b) when We drew him near to Us, he came to Us hastening; (c) when We drew him near to Us, We Ourselves hastened to him. In the verse under comment the word الايمن has been used with regard to Moses while with regard to the Holy Prophet the word مبارك (blessed) is used. This word has a deeper and more comprehensive meaning than مبارك. The Qur'an has been called مبارك i.e. a blessed Book (6 : 93, 156; 21 : 51). The place where the Holy Prophet was born was مبارك i.e. blessed (3 : 97), and so was his landing in Medina (23 : 30). The Divine light which he received has also been described as مبارك (blessed) (24 : 36) and the word of God came to him in ليلة مباركته i.e. blessed night (44 : 4).

2196. Commentary :

In 20:30 Aaron has been described as helper (وزير) of Moses and in the present verse it is said that God bestowed Aaron upon Moses. This shows that Aaron was a follower of the Law revealed to Moses and held a subordinate position to him. It can safely be inferred from

this that one Prophet can be subordinate to another Prophet.

2197. Commentary :

God was well pleased with Abraham. He chose him and his seed for the bestowal of His special favours and blessings and for that purpose He established a covenant with him. The covenant is given in the Bible as follows:

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation (Gen. 17:19, 20).

The covenant began with Isaac and in fulfilment of it God raised a long line of Prophets among his descendants, and also gave them worldly dominion, power and wealth. The covenant found its highest fulfilment in Moses. When, however, the long line of Prophets who came after Moses as his Successors terminated with Jesus, the second part of the covenant which was to be fulfilled through Ishmael came into operation and prophethood passed from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael and this was quite in harmony with the covenant which God had established with Abraham regarding the conferring of His favour upon him and his

56. "He used to enjoin Prayer and alms-giving on his people, and was well pleasing to his Lord."²¹⁹⁸

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا ۝

57. And relate the story of Idrīs as mentioned in the Book. He was a truthful man, and a Prophet.²¹⁹⁹

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيْسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ۝

^a 20 : 133; 33 : 34.

progeny. This is why after Moses mention has been made of Ishmael. The account of Ishmael is introduced with the words *واذكر* (and relate) which shows that one chapter of religious history—that of the House of Israel, is closed and a new one has begun. The Christians have been further told in this verse that the Divine covenant has not terminated with Jesus but in keeping with the promise of God with Abraham has only been transferred to the progeny of Ishmael.

2198. Commentary :

Ishmael was the progenitor of the Holy Prophet of Islam and in Islam very great stress has been laid on the observance of the five daily Prayers and on alms-giving.

2199. Important Words :

إدريس (Idrīs) is derived from *أدرس* which is the transitive form of *درس*. They say *أدرس الكتاب* i.e. he read the book or he read it repeatedly so as to remember it; or he made it easy to remember by much reading; or he learned or studied it. *درسه الكتاب* (*darrasa-hū al-kitāb*) or *أدرسه* means, he taught him the book (Lane). *إدريس* which means, one who reads much or teaches much is derived from *أدرس* as *يعقوب* is from *عقب* and *أضحاك* is from *ضحك* and *يسوع* is from *ساع* and as *إسماعيل* is the combination of *سمع* and *إيل* (meaning God heard) and *إسرائيل* is the combination of *يسر* and *إيل* (meaning the warrior of God).

Much difference of opinion exists among lexicologists about the origin of the word *إدريس*. According to *Lisān* it is a non-Arabic proper noun. According to *Aṣma'ī*, *Qurṭubī* and *Ibn Ḥayyān*, it is not Arabic. *Ibn Sikkīt*, however, is of the opinion that *إدريس* (Idrīs) is an Arabic name. He says that it is derived from *أدرس* as *إبليس* is derived from *أبليس*. But whatever the difference of opinion the Arabs were familiar with this name even before Islam.

Commentary :

Now who is this Idrīs? Most of the Commentators of the Qur'ān are of the opinion that he is Enoch of the Bible. *إدريس* and *חנוك* closely resemble each other in their meanings and significations. Whereas *إدريس* means one who reads much or instructs much, *חנוك* means instruction or dedication (Enc. Bib.). Moreover, the account of Enoch given in the Bible and in Jewish religious literature closely resembles that of Idrīs as given in the Qur'ān. In the Bible we have: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Gen. 5: 24). In Targum, a famous book of Jewish traditions he has been called a holy man of God whom He gave the titles of "Safra Rabba" and "Metatron" (both words meaning a learned man or religious savant) and took up to heaven (Jew. Enc.). In the Jewish book named "Sefer Hanok" (the book of Hanūk) it is written that inhabitants of the earth became

58. And "We exalted him to a lofty station.

59. These are the people ^bupon whom Allah bestowed His blessings from among the Prophets, of the posterity of Adam, and of *the posterity of* those whom We carried *in the Ark* with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel ; and *they are* of those whom We guided and chose. ^oWhen the Signs of the Gracious God were recited unto them, they fell down, prostrating themselves *before God* and weeping.²²⁰⁰

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ۝

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَءِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۚ

إِذَا تُلِّقُ عَلَيْهِمُ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ۝^{السجدة ٥٩}

^a 2 : 254 ; 4 : 159. ^b 1 : 7 ; 4 : 70 ; 5 : 21 ; 57 : 20. ^o 17 : 108, 110 ; 32 : 16.

wicked, therefore God took up Hanuk to heaven and made him a guardian of the heavenly treasures and the chief of angels. In another book named "Hayye Hanok" it is written that he was a holy and righteous priest whom God sent to the world for its reformation, but when it became full of sins, God raised him up to heaven (Jew. Enc.). This account of Enoch resembles very much the picture of Idris as given in the Qur'an in the words: *He was a truthful man and a Prophet and We exalted him to a lofty station.* These commendatory expressions about Idris serve to demolish the false notions held about Jesus. The godhead of Jesus, more than anything else, rests on the belief that he was taken up to heaven alive. Now if, as Christians believe, God took up Jesus to heaven according to the present verse, Idris too was exalted to a very high station in heaven, and according to the Bible Enoch (Idris) also walked with God and was taken up to heaven (Gen. 5 : 24). If Jesus could be regarded as Divine and is entitled to a special spiritual status on the assumption of his having been taken up to heaven, then Idris of the Qur'an or Enoch of the Bible, on that very score is entitled to even a higher

spiritual station. If Jesus has been called son of God in the Bible, Enoch has been called the father of the sons of God in Jewish literature. The Book of Enoch which was originally written in Hebrew and later on was translated into Greek and then into Latin contains a full account of Enoch's life. Its translation in Russian makes very useful and interesting reading.

Ishmael and Idris have been mentioned together in the verse under comment and in 21 : 86, the only two places where mention has been made of Idris in the Qur'an. It is so because Ishmael bears a very close resemblance to him. According to the Qur'an Ishmael was a truthful man and so was Idris. God had raised Idris to a lofty spiritual station and so had He raised Ishmael. About Enoch we read in the Bible that God walked with him (Gen. 5 : 24) and about Ishmael the Bible says: "Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. 17 : 18).

2200. Commentary :

This verse explains two things: (1) The Prophets whose names have been mentioned in it were righteous and holy men. But in spite of

60. Then there came after them "descendants who neglected Prayer, and followed evil desires. So they will meet with destruction,"²²⁰¹

61. Except those ^bwho repent and believe and do good deeds. These will enter Heaven and they will not be wronged in the least—²²⁰²

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا

الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا ۝

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ

الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ۝

^a 7 : 170. ^b 6 : 49; 18 : 89 ; 25 : 71; 34 : 38.

the very exalted position they held they were ordinary mortals. Jesus, like them, too, was a Prophet of God and like them a mere mortal. There was nothing in him that could entitle him to some special position. (2) These righteous and holy men were Divine Prophets and as such sinless. The Jews in the Old Testament (Gen. 9 : 21-23; 19: 31-38; 20:2; Exod. 32:1-4); and Christians in the New Testament (John 10:8) hurled at these paragons of piety and righteousness very filthy charges, the former in order to screen their own crimes and the latter in order to establish the exclusive sinlessness of Jesus. Special stress has been laid on their holiness in the verse under comment and it is in order to clear them completely of the charges attributed to them and also to demolish the wrong notion of the exclusive sinlessness of Jesus that the words "whom We guided and chose" have been used about them.

Some Commentators of the Qur'ān think that the words '*of the posterity of Adam*' refer to Idrīs, and *whom we carried in the Ark with Noah* to Abraham, and the words, *of the posterity of Abraham*, refer to Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the words, *of the posterity of*, understood before the word Israel, to Moses, Aaron, Zachariah, Yaḥyā and Jesus, all of whom have been mentioned in the preceding verses of the present Sūra.

2201. Important Words :

غِيًّا (destruction) is derived from غَوَى which means, he erred ; he deviated from the right way or course; he persisted in ignorance, he failed in attaining his desire ; he acted ignorantly from misbelief ; he perished (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 17.

Commentary :

In fact negligence and remissness in observing Prayers makes a person ignorant of Divine attributes and kills in him the desire to establish his connection with the Creator which in turn throws him into the clutches of the Devil. And whereas negligence in invoking Divine mercy and praying to God leads to failure, the pursuit of evil desires results in apathy towards true knowledge and indulgence in obscenities and idle pursuits; and all these things combined together bring about complete moral and spiritual ruin.

2202. Commentary :

The epithet *عمل صالح* is more applicable to such acts as are done at the proper occasion and suit the exigencies of time than mere devotional acts, as is generally understood.

62. ^aGardens of Eternity, which the Gracious God has promised to His servants in the unseen. Surely His promise must come to pass.²²⁰³

63. ^bThey will not hear therein anything vain; but only *greetings of peace*; they will have their sustenance therein, morning and evening.²²⁰⁴

64. ^cSuch is the Heaven which We give for an inheritance to those of Our servants who are righteous.²²⁰⁵

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًا ﴿٦٢﴾

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا
بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾

تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ
تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾

^a 9 : 72; 13 : 24; 61 : 13.

^b 52 : 24; 56 : 26; 78 : 36 ^c 7 : 44; 43 : 73; 52 : 18.

2203. Commentary :

The words جنات عدن signify Divine favours and blessings which know no end or diminution.

The expression بالغيب signifies that the Faithful will get Gardens of Eternity because they believed in things which they did not see—God, angels, Hereafter etc. Or it may signify that they will get gardens when there will be no apparent signs of their ever getting them.

The word مأتياً (must come to pass) signifies that the fulfilment of the Divine promise is as sure as if it has already come to pass. It may also signify that the Faithful will be given Gardens of Eternity without any wish or desire on their part.

2204. Commentary :

استثناء متصل (but) is used here either as استثناء منقطع or استثناء منقطع. In the former case the verse would mean that the apparently superfluous talk would also be productive of peace and will result in something useful and beneficial. In the latter case it would mean that the believers will hear

nothing vain and useless but will live in perfect peace because there will be peace all round them. They will live in the presence of God Who is peace (59 : 24) and reside in the abode of peace (6 : 128) and angels will enter upon them with greetings of peace (13:25). For a full discussion about استثناء منقطع see 2 : 35.

The verse may also signify that the believers will attain such a high stage of righteousness in the Gardens of Eternity that they will hear no disparaging talk about one another i.e. there will be found absolutely no suspicion of any kind.

The sentence, *They will have their sustenance therein, morning and evening*, means that the believers will constantly hear the sweet voice of God, enjoy His sight and will receive the message of eternal peace. The word “sustenance” covers and applies to all these things.

2205. Commentary :

The word نورث signifies that the believers being God’s own beloved children will get Paradise as of right. The word incidentally implies permanence of the gifts of Paradise and constitutes a refutation of any exclusive title of Jesus to be the son of God.

65. And *angels will say to them*, 'We do not come down save by the command of thy Lord. To Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us and all that is between; and thy Lord is not forgetful.'²²⁰⁶

66. *He is* ^athe Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between the two. Serve Him, therefore and be steadfast in His service. Dost thou know anyone equal to Him?

⁵ 67. And says man, ^b'What! when I am dead, shall I be brought forth alive?'²²⁰⁷

68. Does not man remember that ^c'We created him before, when he was naught?'²²⁰⁸

وَمَا نَنْتَزِلُّ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ١٥

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَلِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ١٦

وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا مِيتٌ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ١٧

أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ١٨

^a 37 : 6 ; 38 : 67; 44 : 8; 78 : 38. ^b 23 : 38; 36 : 79. ^c 19 : 10; 76 : 2.

2206. Commentary :

This verse explains vv. 13:24-25 wherein it is said: *And angels shall enter unto them from every gate, saying 'Peace be unto you, because you were steadfast'* and signifies that the angels would say to the Faithful that they did not bring them greetings of peace of their own accord but with the express command of God, their heavenly Father, and on His behalf.

The words "And thy Lord is not forgetful" mean that God has not forgotten His promise that "He will raise from among the brethren of the Israelites (*i.e.* the Ishmaelites) a Prophet like unto Moses and will put His words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that He shall command him" (Deut. 18 : 18).

2207. Commentary :

الإنسان (man) does not here mean man in general but a particular class of men, *viz.* those

who doubt the existence of the life after death. In fact, there are very few people in the world who totally deny the existence of the Hereafter. It is not by their words of mouth but by their actual actions and deeds—their entire engrossment in material pursuits, that they express their doubt or denial of the life beyond the grave. The interrogative form of the words used in the verse shows that such people suffer merely from a lack of certainty with regard to life after death and not that they totally deny it. As the *Sūra* deals with Christian dogmas and doctrines, so the present and the following several verses deal also with the doubts of Christians about life after death.

2208. Commentary :

The word شَيْئًا here signifies مذكوراً *i.e.* anything worth mentioning or having any significance or importance. This meaning is supported by 76 : 2.

69. And, by thy Lord, "We shall assuredly gather them together, and the satans too; then shall We bring them on their knees around Hell."²²⁰⁹

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ
حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثَّتًا ۙ ﴿١٩﴾

70. Then shall We certainly pick out, from every group, those of them who were most stubborn in rebellion against the Gracious God.²²¹⁰

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ
عِتْيَانًا ۚ ﴿٢٠﴾

^a 10 : 29; 17 : 98; 34 : 41.

2209. Important Words :

جهنم (Hell). Commentators of the Qur'ān generally agree that in Arabic this word has no root and is used as a proper name for the place of punishment reserved for the evil-doers in the next world. Non-Arabic lexicographers, however, are of the opinion that it is an Aramaic word and is used for the place of punishment after death. In Hebrew it is used as Gehenna which in Aramaic originally was 'Hinnom' but later on came to be changed into "Ge-Hinnom" (Enc. Bib.) which means, "the valley of death or destruction." The word "Ge-Hinnom" also seems to have been a distorted form of the Arabic words ذو and هنم, the latter word meaning 'a leopard'; and so ذوهنم means a place where leopards live. Thus "Ge-Hinnom" which in Aramaic means the valley of death and destruction was originally ذوهنم. The non-Arabs generally change the letter ذ into ج; so ذوهنم became converted into the Aramaic 'Ge-Hinnom' and the Arabs borrowed it from the non-Arabs and turned it into جهنم. The word may also have been a combination of جهن which means, he went near, and جهم which means, he became contracted in the face. So جهنم may mean a thing or place which a person at first likes but when he goes near it he comes to dislike it and contracts his face to show his dislike for

it. Thus the very construction of the word جهنم explains its nature and character, i.e. at first a person commits hellish deeds, thinking them to be good but when as a result of those deeds he approaches near Hell, he dislikes it and contracts his face to show his dislike. See also 2 : 207.

The word الشياطين (satans) applies to those philosophers and exponents of a materialistic concept of life who engender in the minds of disbelievers doubts regarding life after death.

2210. Important Words :

ثم meaning then, i.e. afterward or afterwards, is a particle or conjunction denoting order and delay. Sometimes it is used to denote the order of enunciation, not the virtual order. It also has the meaning of و (and) and ف (so) (Lane).

In the present verse ثم shows order i.e. this thing will happen after the thing that has been mentioned before. Some Commentators of the Qur'ān think that this verse can be explained by reading it as: ثم لننزعن من كل شيعة ايهم اشد على الرحمان عتيا i.e. then shall We certainly pick out from every group those about whom it will be said that they were most stubborn in rebellion against the Gracious God. Others are of the view that the expression ايهم اشد على الرحمان عتيا is an independent and

71. And surely, We know best those most deserving to be burned therein.²²¹¹

ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا صِلَاتًا ۝٤١

72. And "there is not one of you but will come to it. This is a fixed decree of thy Lord."²²¹²

وَأَن فِتْنَتُكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ۝٤٢

° 21 : 99.

separate sentence and forms an answer to the words من هم (who are they) which are understood before this sentence, and means, "they are those who were most stubborn in rebellion against the Gracious God. The words على الرحمن mean against or in opposition to the Gracious God.

2211. Commentary :

In this verse ثم is a conjunction denoting order of enunciation and not proper order, meaning 'and'. The meaning of the word would be, and (We tell you another thing that....)

The words الذين هم اولى بها صليا may mean:

- (a) those who are more fitted to burn in the fire than to be left out of it;
- (b) those who are more deserving than other people to burn in the fire;
- (c) those who deserve to be punished more by being thrown into the fire than by any other means.

The reference in the verse is to the Christian nations who at other places in the Qur'an (18 : 95; 21 : 97) have been called ياجوج وماجوج. They have been so called because they have made free use of fire-arms such as guns, tanks, atom-bombs etc., اج (fire) being the root from which both these names have been derived. As these nations have made free use of fire-arms, so shall they be punished with fire.

2212. Commentary :

The word كم (you) in منكم is not of

general application. It applies, as the context shows, only to the disbelievers and to those who doubt the existence of the life after death. All these categories of men have been mentioned in the preceding verses. According to Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ikrama, another reading of منكم (of you) is منهم (of them) and the former used to say that the expression منكم is addressed to disbelievers (Qurṭubī). So it is to these people i.e. disbelievers mentioned in vv. 67-69 above that the pronoun كم (you) clearly refers. On the other hand the Qur'an quite clearly and emphatically supports the view that the righteous believers will not go to Hell; they will bask in the sunshine of God's love and mercy (27 : 90 ; 39 : 62 ; 43 : 69 ; etc.) and will be far removed from the fire of Hell and will not hear even its faintest sound (21:102-103). But if the pronoun (you) be taken to include both the believers and the disbelievers, then in the case of disbelievers the verse would mean that all of them will go to Hell and in the case of believers the fire of Hell referred to in the verse would mean the fire of trials and tribulations through which they have to pass in the present life and which they endure with patience and fortitude and out of which eventually they are taken to be brought into the haven of Divine bliss and peace as the next verse shows. This reference is supported by several

73. "And We shall save the righteous and We shall leave the wrongdoers therein, on their knees.

74. And when Our manifest Signs are recited unto them, the disbelievers say to the believers, 'Tell us, which of the two parties is better in respect of position and makes a more impressive assembly?'²²¹³

75. And ^bhow many generations have We destroyed before them, who were better off in wealth *than these* and better in outward show!²²¹⁴

ثُمَّ نَجِّى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا

جَنَّتًا ﴿٢١٣﴾

وَإِذَا تُلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أِنَّا الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَآحْسَنُ

نَدِيًّا ﴿٢١٤﴾

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَانًا

وَرِيًّا ﴿٢١٥﴾

^a 21 : 102; 39 : 62. ^b 6 : 7 ; 17 : 18 ; 19 : 99; 21 : 12 ; 36 : 32; 50 : 37.

sayings of the Holy Prophet in which he has likened fever to the fire of Hell. He is reported to have said: The fever is a believer's share of the Hell-fire (Qurtubī as quoted by Ṭabarī).

The Holy Prophet himself has explained the meaning of this verse. His wife Ḥafṣa is reported to have said: "On one occasion when the Prophet said that none of those of his Companions who had taken part in the battle of Badr or Uḥad will go to Hell, I drew his attention to the present verse, upon which he slightly reprimanded me for having misunderstood its meaning and directed me to read the next verse" (Muslim as quoted by Jāmi' al-Bayān). The fact that the Holy Prophet referred Ḥafṣa to the next verse (v. 73) shows that he also understood the word *ثم* occurring in that verse to mean "and", and had taken the next verse as an independent and separate clause, otherwise he could not have reprimanded Ḥafṣa for having misunderstood the meaning of the verse under comment.

2213. **Important Words :**

ندى (assembly) is derived from ندا. They

say ندا القوم i.e. the people gathered and came to a meeting. ندى means, النادى i.e. an assembly (Aqrah).

Commentary :

آيات (Signs) are those proofs and arguments based on reason, intellect and experience, which point to the existence of a thing, its aim and purpose, and establish it. آيات بينات (manifest Signs) are those Signs and arguments or reasons which not only point to the existence of a thing and prove it but are quite suited to the occasion and to the problem which they are intended to prove, and they have a very noble and sublime purpose to serve which they eminently do.

This verse shows that Western nations are very proud of their material pomp and wealth and are proud also of their civilization and culture, the order of their society and their way of life and their military organizations and vast numbers.

2214. **Important Words :**

رأى (outward show) is derived from رآى which means, he saw or he thought. رؤيا

76. Say, 'The Gracious God does give those who are in error long respite "until, when they will see that with which they are threatened—whether it be punishment or the *final* Hour—they will realize who is worse in *respect of* position and who is weaker in forces.²²¹⁵

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدَّةً
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ
فَيَسْأَلُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ۝٢١٥

72 : 25

means, a sight; a beautiful sight; anything to which people raise their eyes to see. رُئِيَاً means, aspect, look or outward appearance; beautiful aspect or outward appearance or what the eyes see of goodly condition and clean apparel (Lane & Aqrab). For أَثْنَاءَ (wealth) see 16:81.

Commentary :

The verse while, on the one hand, shows how proud the Western Christian nations are of their material might, pomp and wealth and of the high order of their society, on the other, it leaves no doubt that in spite of all these things they will eventually come to grief. It may be said that the statement made in the verse under comment that there lived in the past more powerful and wealthier peoples than the present Christian nations of the West is contrary to the facts of history. Speaking absolutely it is correct that Western Christian nations of today were never equalled in the past by any nation in material power and wealth but speaking comparatively there certainly have been rulers and nations in the past who were more powerful than these nations, inasmuch as the opponents of the former were much weaker to them in material resources and in numbers than the adversaries of Western Christian nations of today are to them. It is in this sense that some of the nations of antiquity have been described as more powerful than the Western Christian nations of today in the present verse.

2215. Commentary :

The verb فليمدد while being in the imperative mood has been used in the indicative mood in order to impart more emphasis to the meaning. The verse means to say that God will give more and more respite to the wrongdoing people and will grant them increase in power and wealth and resources, so that when Divine punishment descends upon them, their destruction will look all the more impressive and awe-inspiring. العذاب (the punishment) here may signify the intervening punishment which will overtake Western nations in stages before their final destruction, and الساعة may mean their complete and final destruction. Thus the verse means to say that Divine punishment will descend upon the nations of the West in different forms and stages. At first their power will gradually weaken and decline by wars that will take place at short intervals and then a global war in which most deadly weapons will be used will destroy them fully and completely.

The words العذاب and الساعة having been used simultaneously in the verse show that the punishment which will overtake Western nations, if they did not accept truth and mend their ways, will at first be in the form of العذاب (intervening punishment) for some of them and الساعة (final destruction) for others till ultimately it will take the form of الساعة for all of them.

77. "And Allah increases in guidance those who follow guidance. ^aAnd the good works that endure are best in the sight of thy Lord as reward, and best as resort."²²¹⁶

78. Hast thou not seen him who disbelieves in Our Signs, and says, "I shall certainly be given wealth and children?"²²¹⁷

79. Has he become acquainted with the unseen or has he taken a promise from the Gracious God?²²¹⁸

80. Nay! We shall note down what he says and We shall greatly prolong for him the punishment.²²¹⁹

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحِينَ
خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرَدًّا ۝

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا
وَوَلَدًا ۝

أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ۝

كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ۝

^a 9 : 124 ; 47 : 18; 48 : 5; ^b 18 : 47; 87 : 18. ^c 18 : 35; 74 : 13-14.

The verse points to an absolute certainty that the path of sin and iniquity leads to sure destruction. It also shows that when destruction will overtake Western nations, they will realize that the germs of their destruction had lain hidden in their very material power of which they were so proud and that the apparently weak condition of the Eastern nations possessed seeds of their growing strength and power.

2216. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that every new change that takes place in the world makes the position of believers stronger and firmer. They grow in influence, prestige and numbers. The Quranic words, *And the good works . . resort*, remind Christian Western peoples of the beautiful and oft-quoted words of Jesus, viz., lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matt. 6 : 19, 20). These words imply a warning to his so-called followers that it is

futile on their part to bank upon their material riches and resources because they are sure to perish while it is only good works that will endure and last.

2217. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that the disbeliever sets great store by his wealth and children and takes great pride in them. "The disbeliever" in the verse represents the disbelieving proud nations of the West.

2218. **Commentary :**

The words "the unseen" may signify the conjectures and guesses of political philosophers and soothsayers and the words, *a promise from the Gracious God*, may signify the promise given through a Divine Messenger about the eventual triumph of the cause of truth.

2219. **Important Words :**

كَلَّا (nay) is a particle and signifies, rejection; rebuke; and reprimanding a person for what he has said being untrue. It also signifies that what has been said before is wrong and what follows after is right (Lane).

81. And We shall inherit of him *all* that he talks of and ^ahe shall come to Us all alone.²²²⁰

82. ^bAnd they have taken *other* gods beside Allah, that they may be a *source of power* for them.²²²¹

83. Not at all ! ^cThey will deny their worship, and will become their opponents.²²²²

وَنَرْتُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ۝

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ۝

كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَلَالًا ۝

^a 6 : 95; 18 : 49. ^b 21 : 25; 36 : 75. ^c 6 : 24; 10 : 29.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers take pride in their wealth and children but they should know that they will be deprived of all these things and their punishment will be prolonged as was their prosperity prolonged because it was the prolongation of their prosperity that made them proud and arrogant.

2220. Commentary :

The sentence, *And We shall inherit of him all that he talks of*, may mean : (a) We shall inherit his wealth and children, i.e. he shall be obliged to leave all his wealth and children behind; (b) We shall preserve his insolent talk and will remind him of it when he comes to Us and will punish him for it; and (c) his inheritors will enter the fold of Islam and all his wealth and resources will be used in the cause of Islam.

The words, *He shall come to Us all alone*, signify that he shall be deprived of all his wealth so that all his sycophants and hangers-on who had gathered round him on account of his great wealth and children will leave him and he will be left all alone.

The expression *ما يقول* refers to the proud talk in which the disbelievers indulge because of their great wealth, power, influence and children.

2221. Commentary :

The verse may signify that disbelievers erect big houses of worship in the name of their idols so that it may redound to their honour and good name, or that they worship false deities seeking thereby nearness to God. To the latter meaning of the verse reference has also been made in 39 : 4 where it is stated : *And those who take for protectors others beside Him say, we serve them only that they may bring us near to Allah in station.*

2222. Commentary :

The words : *they will deny their worship* may mean (a) the false deities will deny that the idolaters ever worshipped them; (b) the idolaters will deny that they ever worshipped false deities. For (a) see 2 : 167; 10 : 29; 16 : 87; 28 : 64; and for (b) see 6 : 24; 30 : 14.

It is interesting to note that though the idol-worshippers and their false deities will be many, the word *ضدًا* used for them in the verse is in the singular number. This is to show that the idol-worshippers and their objects of worship, while standing before God's Judgment Seat, will become one in this respect that they will deny each other.

To the objection that when some of the deities are inanimate things, how they will speak, three

- R. 6 84. Seest thou not that "We have sent satans against the disbelievers goading them on to acts of disobedience"?²²²³

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤْزُهُمْ
أَسْرًا

85. So be not thou in haste with regard to them; We are keeping full account of their doings.²²²⁴

فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا

^a 8 : 49 ; 47 : 26 ; 59 : 17.

answers may be given: (a) some of the idols are living beings such as Jesus etc; (b) in the spiritual realm, such as in visions and dreams inanimate things are known to speak; and (c) the idols of stone are in reality physical representations of holy men and angels. These holy men and angels whose representations in the physical forms the idolaters worshipped will speak against them.

2223. Important Words :

ارسلنا (We sent). ارسلت البعير means, I let the camel go wherever it liked. ارسل فلاناً عليه means, he left such a one to do with him whatever he liked ; he set such a one on him or gave him mastery or power over him (Aqrab & Lane).

أز (goading them on) is derived from از. They say أزت القدر *i.e.* the cooking pot boiled or boiled vehemently or made a sound in cooking. أزه means, he stirred him, roused or provoked him; and insisted, urged or instigated him, أزه على كذا to do such a thing. أزه is more intensive than هزه which means, he shook him ; induced him to do the thing (Lane).

Commentary :

The words تؤزهم أزا mean: (a) satans incite disbelievers to acts of disobedience; (b) they continue to incite disbelievers to acts of disobedience till they enter Hell; and (c) they incite disbelievers against Muslims that they should attack the latter and persecute them.

الكافرين (disbelievers) here signifies a particular class of disbelievers *i.e.* those disbelievers who by their persistent transgression and evil deeds deprive themselves completely of Divine protection.

2224. Commentary :

In the words فلا تعجل عليهم Muslims are enjoined not to lose patience if Divine punishment is slow in overtaking Western Christian nations. The words also seem to enjoin Muslims not to be so impatient as to indulge in such foolish dreams as waging Jihād against disbelievers because they (Muslims) do not possess the necessary means to fight them successfully, but should adopt only spiritual means for this purpose such as praying and preaching and disseminating the teachings of Islam. The warning contained in the Holy Prophet's words لا يدان لأحد لقتالهم (no one will have the power to fight them) may perhaps have been derived from this Divine command.

The words انما نعد لهم عذاباً mean : (a) We are keeping full account of their wicked deeds; and (b) We are keeping account of the time when their punishment will be due. The verse means to say that their doom is already decreed and it will overtake them when the appointed time arrives.

86. Remember the day when ^aWe shall gather the righteous before the Gracious God as *honoured guests* ; ²²²⁵

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ السَّافِقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفَدَّا ۝

87. And ^bWe shall drive the guilty to Hell *like a herd of thirsty camels*. ²²²⁶

وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وَرَدًّا ۝

^a 39 : 74.

^b 39 : 72.

2225. Important Words :

وفدأ (honoured guests) is the plural of وفد which is active participle from وفد. They say وفد الى او على السلطان i.e. he came to the king as an ambassador, envoy or messenger; or to convey gifts and ask aid; he went forth to the king (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

This verse has provoked discussion as to whether the righteous will be assembled before God or will merely be admitted to Paradise. There seems to be no real difference between the two alternative senses, because Paradise is the House of God and going to Paradise is as good as going before God. The verse may also apply to two resurrections ; the one in this world and the other in the next. Resurrection in the next world will both be individual and collective. Immediately after its departure from the physical body the human soul begins to taste of the fruits of the works, good or bad, a man might have done in this world. This state of the soul is known by its individual resurrection in which its experience of the reward or punishment, as the case may be, of the next life is partial and incomplete. The Resurrection on the Last Day, however, will be collective when the whole of mankind will be brought before God's Judgment Seat. Then the realization by the soul of its state of bliss or punishment will be complete. That will be the final Resurrection. The significance of the verse as

is clear from many sayings of the Holy Prophet, is that there will be great confusion and bewilderment on the Day of Resurrection. But immediately after the initial shock the righteous will regain their composure and peace of mind and will be honoured with the gift of God's favours and blessings.

2226. Important Words :

وردأ (a herd of thirsty camels) means, coming to or arriving at water; water to which one comes to drink; turn of coming to water; a number of camels or a herd of thirsty camels; birds arriving at water. See also 11 : 99.

نسوق (We shall drive) is derived from ساق. They say ساق الابل i.e. he drove the camels. ساق الحديث means, he continued the talk endlessly; he went on relating the narrative. سائق means, a driver; or one who drives from behind while قائد is one who guides—a general or a leader. The expression نسوق المجرمين الى جهنم وردأ means, We will drive the sinners like beasts who come to water to slake their thirst (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Here the word نسوق (We shall drive) has been used about the sinners and means that they will be driven to Hell against their wish. But this word has also been used in the Qur'ān about the righteous believers (39 : 74). But in that verse the word has been used in the sense of being conducted or carried. If, however, in 39 : 74 the

88. "None will have the power of intercession save he who has received a promise from the Gracious God."²²²⁷

89. ^bAnd they say, 'the Gracious God has taken unto Himself a son.'²²²⁸

لَا يَبْلُغُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ

عَهْدًا ۝

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ۝

^a 2 : 49; 20 : 110; 21 : 29; 34 : 24; 39 : 45; 43 : 87; 53 : 27; 74 : 49.

^b 2 : 117; 4 : 172; 6 : 101-102; 10 : 69; 17 : 112; 18 : 5; 19 : 36; 21 : 27; 25 : 3; 39 : 5; 43 : 82.

word were taken to have been used in the sense of driving, then it would apply to the beasts which the righteous will be riding to go to Paradise and thus the meaning would be that the beasts which the righteous will be riding will be driven to Paradise.

2227. Important Words :

الشَّفَاعَةُ (intercession) is derived from شَفَعَ which means, he provided a thing, which was alone with another, or he joined up a single thing with another, so as to make it one of a pair or couple. According to Imām-Rāghib الشَّفْعُ signifies the adjoining of a thing to its like; thus the word has the significance of likeness or similarity also. Thus الشَّفَاعَةُ has come to mean interceding or praying for a person on the ground that he is connected with the intercessor or is like or similar to him (Aqrab, Lane & Mufraḍat).

Commentary :

الشَّفَاعَةُ (intercession) is governed by the following four conditions:

1. He who intercedes has a special connection with the person (or Being) with whom he wishes to intercede and enjoys his special favour, for without such connection he dare not intercede nor can intercession be fruitful.

2. The person for whom intercession is to be made must have a true and real connection

with the intercessor, for none would think of interceding for a person unless the latter is specially connected with him.

3. The person in whose favour intercession is sought must generally deserve the description of a good person and must be one who has made an honest effort to win the pleasure of God (21: 29). If he ever happens to fall into sin, it is in a moment of weakness. A wicked man cannot enjoy true and real connection with a holy person.

4. Intercession can only be made with God's express permission (2 : 256; 10 : 4).¹

For a detailed note on الشَّفَاعَةُ see 2 : 49.

It may be noted that of all Prophets and Messengers of God the Holy Prophet alone will be granted permission to intercede on the Last Day.

2228. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the so-called followers of Jesus think that he will intercede for them. How could this be possible when he was a strict believer in the Oneness of God and they ascribe partners to the Almighty which is a heinous sin. They possess no likeness with him while one of the most important conditions of intercession is that the person for whom intercession is sought must be like him who is to make the intercession.

90. Assuredly, you have done a most hideous thing!²²²⁹

91. The heavens might well-nigh burst thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces,²²³⁰

92. Because they ascribe a son to the Gracious God,

93. "Whereas it becomes not the Gracious God to take unto Himself a son."²²³¹

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِذَا ۙ

تَكَادُ السَّمُوتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَ

تَخْرُ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا ۙ

أَنْ دَعَا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ۙ

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ۙ

* 2 : 117; 4 : 172 ; 10 : 69 ; 37 : 152-155.

2229. Important Words :

إِذَا (most hideous) is derived from أَذَى. They say أَذَى الْوَيْلِ *i.e.* a terrible calamity befell him. أَذَى الْأَمْرِ means, the event or affair oppressed him, distressed him or afflicted him. أَمْرٌ إِد means, a very evil, abominable, severe, thing or affair; an evil thing against which human nature revolts or which causes an uproar on account of its extreme abomination (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that *شُرْك* (idolatry) is a most abominable thing. Human nature revolts against it and reason and intellect recoil in disgust from it and no sane person can help protesting against such a blasphemous practice or belief. No doctrine has been condemned so strongly and repeatedly in the Qur'an as the Christian dogma that Jesus, son of Mary, a mortal, subject to all human weaknesses and frailties, was the son of God.

2230. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the dogma that Jesus is the son of God is so hideous that the heavens, the earth and the mountains might well break into pieces and fall asunder at the

enormity of this idea. The belief is repugnant to heavenly beings because it is against Divine attributes and against all that they stand for. It is revolting for human beings living on the earth because it offends against the dictates of human nature and man's intellect and reason recoil in sheer disgust from it. Men of high and noble ideals such as Divine Prophets and God's Elect also deny and denounce it because the idea that man should stand in need of the vicarious sacrifice of anybody for the attainment of salvation and a high moral status runs counter to their own spiritual experience. The doctrine of Atonement is dependent on and is inseparably connected with belief in the sonship of Jesus and bars the door to all moral and spiritual advancement and attainment of high and noble ideals and condemns man to undeserved moral degradation. In short, the doctrine that Jesus is son of God is against all that is sane, sound and sensible.

2231. Commentary :

The *Sūra* contains a most emphatic and clear denunciation of Christian dogmas, particularly the basic doctrine that Jesus is son of God, from which all other dogmas flow. In the present

94. "There is none in the heavens and the earth but he shall come to the Gracious God as a bondman."²²³²

95. Verily, He comprehends them by His knowledge and has numbered them all fully.

96. And each of them shall come to Him singly on the Day of Resurrection.²²³³

97. Those who believe and do good deeds—the Gracious God will create love in their hearts.²²³⁴

إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ۝

لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ۝

وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فَرْدًا ۝

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ۝

^a 20 : 109.

and preceding four verses special stress has been laid on the refutation and condemnation of this dogma. It is worthy of special note that the Divine attribute "Raḥmān" has been repeatedly referred to in this *Sūra*—it has been mentioned as many as sixteen times. As the fundamental dogma of the sonship of Jesus and its corollary, the dogma of Atonement, involve a denial of the Divine attribute "Raḥmān" and as the central theme of this *Sūra* is the refutation of this dogma, this attribute inevitably has been repeatedly referred to. The dogma of Atonement implies that God cannot forgive the sins of men whereas the Divine attribute "Raḥmān" implies that He can and actually often does forgive them, hence its repetition in this *Sūra*.

2232. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the Gracious God needs no son to help Him or succeed Him, because He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and His kingdom extends over the whole universe and because all men are His servants and Jesus is one of them.

2233. Commentary :

This verse contains a further refutation of

Atonement. It purports to say that every believer in Atonement will appear before God alone on the Day of Resurrection when he will have to render an account of his beliefs and deeds, and will have to carry his own cross and no one else will bear his burden and atone for his sins. Jesus himself says: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Luke 14 : 27; Mark 8 : 34).

2234. Important Words :

وداً (love) is infinitive-noun from ود (wadda). They say وده *i.e.* he loved him or it. ود (wad), ود (wid) and ود (wud) mean the same thing, *viz.*, (a) deep love and affection; (b) a person loved, an object of love. ودود means, a person who loves much; very loving and affectionate. الودود is one of the Divine attributes meaning, Most Loving towards His servants ; also One Who is loved in the hearts of His servants (Aqrab & Tāj).

Commentary :

The words سيجعل لهم الرحمان ودا may have one of the following meanings: (a) God will put

98. So "We have made it (the Qur'an) easy in thy tongue that thou mayest give thereby good tidings to the righteous, and warn thereby a contentious people."²²³⁵

99. ^bAnd how many a generation have We destroyed before them! Canst thou see a single one of them, or hear even a whisper of them?²²³⁶

فَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَرْزِقُهُ بِلسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ
بِهِ قَوْمًا لَّدَا ۝

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِشُّ مِنْهُمْ
مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ۝

^a 44 : 59; 54 : 18. ^b 17 : 18; 19 : 75; 21 : 12 ; 36 : 32; 50 : 37.

His own love in the hearts of the righteous; or (b) God will have deep love for the righteous; (c) God will put deep love for mankind in the hearts of the righteous, or (d) God will create love for the righteous in the hearts of men.

2235. Important Words :

لَّدَا (contentious) is derived from لَدَّ (ladda) which means, he was violent or vehement in contention ; in dispute ; in litigation. لَدَّهُ means, he overcame him or opposed him violently in contention or altercation; in dispute; in litigation. لَّدَا is the plural of لَدَّ which means, a man violent or vehement in contention; in dispute; in litigation; or difficult therein, and vehement in war: or a contentious or litigious and tenacious adversary who will not incline to the truth (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

2236. Important Words :

تَحِشُّ (thou seest) is derived from حَسَّ. They say حَسَّ الشَّيْءُ i.e. he perceived or became sensible

of the حَسَّ (hiss) of the thing; he ascertained the thing as one ascertains a thing that is perceived by the senses; he knew the thing; or he perceived it by means of any of the senses, by seeing, feeling, touching etc.

Commentary :

The verse embodies for the Western Christian nations a most grim warning about the dreadful fate that is in store for them if they did not accept the truth and give up their evil ways. It purports to say that they are proud of their material power and resources and their worldly prosperity and progress. But they have ignored the patent fact that wrong beliefs and a life of sin leads only to destruction. They are warned that there had lived before them people who were at least as powerful and prosperous as they are and yet on account of their evil deeds and transgressions they were so completely destroyed that no trace was left of them.

CHAPTER 20

ṬĀHĀ

(Revealed before Hijra)

Time of Revelation

This *Sūra* belongs to the Meccan period. ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd regards it as one of those *Sūras* which were revealed very early in the Prophet’s ministry and were among the first to be committed to memory by him. These were, besides Ṭāhā, *Sūras* Banī Isrā’īl, Kahf, Maryam and Anbiyā’ (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Tafsīr*).

Wherry has assigned the revelation of this *Sūra* to the third part of the Meccan period, i.e. a little before Hijra. He has done so on the assumption that an account of some Israelite Prophets has been given in this *Sūra*. But why this fact at all should have been selected by him as a reason for placing the revelation just before Hijra he has not taken the trouble to explain, because such an account is also to be found in *Sūra* Maryam which by common consent was revealed in the early years of the Call, most probably in its 5th year. So to fix the end of the Meccan period as the period for the revelation of the present *Sūra* only on this account is indeed a bold assertion which contradicts tradition and history. As stated above ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd included this *Sūra* among those Chapters of the Qur’ān which were revealed very early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry and which he learned first of all, and ‘Abdullah’s testimony who was one of the Holy Prophet’s earliest and most trusted Companions must necessarily carry great weight.

Connection with the Preceding *Sūra*

The *Sūra* has a very close connection with its predecessor, *Sūra* Maryam. Towards the close of the latter *Sūra* it was stated that the Qur’ān has been revealed in the Arabic tongue in order that the Holy Prophet may have no difficulty in conveying its Message to his people and that they in their turn may easily grasp, comprehend and imbibe its full import. The Qur’ān is also intended to give glad tidings to the righteous who act upon its teaching with a fervour and spontaneity which is born of conviction in its Divine origin. It is revealed also to warn and bring home to those who have forged false beliefs the realization of the falsity and untenability of their position.

The *Sūra* continues to deal with the subject which has been treated in the preceding Chapter i.e. *Sūra* Maryam. That *Sūra* primarily deals with Christian dogmas. One of the basic doctrines of Christianity is that the Law is a curse. The present *Sūra* opens with an emphatic contradiction of this Christian belief. At the very outset it tells us that the Law is not only not a curse

but is positively a Divine mercy, and that instead of being a burden and an encumbrance it is intended to afford solace and spiritual contentment to man. The *Sūra* opens with the comforting message that the Qur'ān has been revealed to the Holy Prophet to render his task easy and to confer honour and eminence upon him. It is in fulfilment of this promise that literally and in substance all facilities have been provided to him for the preaching of its Message. The Qur'ān has been revealed in the Prophet's own tongue, its style is easy and simple, its teachings are in perfect harmony with human nature and reason and are practical and practicable. In short, every care has been taken to save this Book from becoming a burden and an encumbrance to man.

The *Sūra* possesses another deeper and wider connection with *Sūra Maryam*. In that *Sūra* light was shed on the early history of Christianity. It was stated that the sole object of Jesus's mission was to establish Unity of God but his followers defied and flouted his simple teachings and instead made him an object of worship and discarded the Law and dubbed it as a curse. The present *Sūra* contradicts and condemns this foolish and insensate view. Its opening verses deal with the origin of the Mosaic Dispensation in some detail. We are told that Moses's greatest achievement lay in the fact that he gave to the Israelites a comprehensive Law, the basic principle of which was the doctrine that God is One. So, consistently with human reason and common sense Christianity which is only a branch of the Mosaic Dispensation should not and could not have gone against this doctrine of the Oneness of God. The present Christian dogmas and doctrines of the Trinity and sonship of Jesus are, therefore, a later interpolation.

Then in order to explain the nature and reality of the Law (*Shari'at*) and sin, this subject has been carried from the time of Moses right up to the beginning of creation. In fact, lack of proper comprehension and realization of the subject lies at the very root of repudiation of the Law or the *Shari'at* by Christians and is also the source and fountain of their شرک i.e. idolatry. Because if it be admitted that Divine revelation was not vouchsafed to man right from the beginning of creation, the fact will have to be admitted that man can do without the Law or the *Shari'at* and also that he can frame it for himself which is God's own special prerogative. Thus, this idea leads directly to شرک and to the doctrine that man needs no Law or the *Shari'at*.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with a message of comfort for the Holy Prophet and the believers and it is stated that God has revealed the Qur'ān to lighten our burdens and not to add to our difficulties. It is further stated that the Qur'ān is easily comprehensible. It deals with all the major needs and requirements of man, having full regard for his feelings and susceptibilities. It is quite competent to do so because God Who has revealed it is fully conversant with the secrets of nature and also with man's physical and spiritual needs, and because He has complete authority and control over all things. He therefore has made full provision for those needs, and as that provision has been made in the Law or the *Shari'at*, therefore the *Shari'at* could not be a burden for man but a mercy and a blessing for him.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to tell Christians that in order to understand and realize the truths embodied in the Qur'ān they should ponder over the circumstances and conditions through which

Moses had to pass; how God helped him in his state of extreme helplessness and how He guided him to the right path and exalted him and revealed Himself to him. Next, we are told that the Divine Word came to Moses and the worship of God was made incumbent upon him and truth was revealed to him that the actions of man would be rewarded according to their deserts, and that man would be judged according to his deeds and not by his belief in Atonement.

Then a brief mention is made of the manifold favours that God bestowed upon Moses from the time of his birth till he came of age. It is stated that after the spiritual upbringing of Moses had become complete and he was found fit to be entrusted with the great and onerous responsibilities of a Prophet he was commanded to go to Pharaoh and to convey to him the Divine Message and that Aaron, his brother, was commissioned to assist him in the discharge of his great and noble mission. The narrative continues to the effect that Moses went to Pharaoh and conveyed to him the Divine Message but Pharaoh refused to accept it, behaved arrogantly and sought to kill him. Thereupon Moses was commanded by God to take the Israelites out of Egypt to Canaan. Pharaoh pursued him with his mighty hosts but Divine punishment overtook him. After the Israelites were delivered from Pharaoh, Moses went up to the Mount where the Law was revealed to him. In his absence the Israelites set up idols and began to worship them and consequently were punished, but in the end they repented and gave up idolatry.

The *Sūra* then administers a subtle rebuke to Christians. They are told that when before the advent of Jesus the Israelites had become a unitarian people and later great stress had also been laid in the Qur'ān upon Divine Unity and upon the importance and significance of the Law or the *Sharī'at*, how was it that a teaching which professed to regard the Law a curse and entertained and preached polytheistic beliefs could wedge in between these two monotheistic creeds ?

Next, mention is made of Divine punishment that would overtake Christian nations after they will have enjoyed uniform material prosperity for a thousand years, ranging from the 4th to the 14th century of the Hijra. Of these the last three centuries would be marked by progress and prosperity of a very high order. But when at the height of their glory and greatness the Christian nations would be warned that a dreadful fate was in store for them, people would ask in doubt and amazement how could it be possible, and how the power of these mighty nations could ever break and their glory depart? The *Sūra* emphatically declares that this event will certainly come to pass and Christian nations will be seized with a terrible visitation, "lofty mountains shall crumble and become like scattered dust" (20 : 106).

Then the subject dealt with in the opening verses of the *Sūra* is rehearsed, viz., that the Qur'ān easily yields to comprehension because it has been revealed in the national tongue of the people who are its first addressees. Like the Gospels it does not usually talk in parables and metaphors, thus leaving the subject confused and lacking in clarity, but explains its principles and teachings fully and renders them quite clear and transparent. Then again the importance of the *Sharī'at* is driven home and we are told that the Law is not a curse but a blessing and a mercy

of God, therefore the Faithful should wait patiently for new commandments and ordinances to be revealed. After this reference is made to the expulsion of Adam from "the garden" and Christians are told that this incident on which the whole fabric of Christian doctrine of Atonement stands is either misunderstood or deliberately mis-interpreted. The truth is that the birth of Adam took place in pursuance of a special Divine plan, and Divine plans never miscarry or fail in their object. While on the one hand the Bible says that God created Adam in His own image (Gen. I : 27), on the other hand it declares that beguiled by Eve he fell into sin. In this way the Bible contradicts itself. According to the Qur'ān, however, Adam having been created in God's own image and after His likeness could not possibly have been guilty of any such fall imputed to him by the Bible. The Quranic statement, unlike the statement of the Bible is, therefore, quite consistent with reason. It describes Adam as only having slipped into an inadvertent lapse.

The *Sūra* further observes that if Adam had really committed a sin, then God's plan had miscarried and not Adam but God Himself was to blame and that it was God's own weakness and not that of Adam that had become exposed. Then those people who reject the Law and turn away from it receive a severe scolding and are condemned as deprived of Divine light. Next, the Holy Prophet is told that if disbelievers have not been punished so far it is because everything has an appointed time. He should go on preaching his Message and success ultimately is bound to come to him.

Towards the end of the *Sūra* the Holy Prophet is commanded to tell disbelievers that the Signs and miracles of their devising and choice will never be shown to them but God Himself will decide when and which Signs to show. In spite of their disbelief and transgression they will get respite as did disbelievers in the past. The latter were seized with Divine punishment when their transgression and iniquity had exceeded all legitimate bounds. So will it happen to the enemies of the Holy Prophet. They will also be punished at the proper time because God is a just God and if the Holy Prophet's enemies, in spite of their transgressions and tyrannies, are not punished, then He would rightly be regarded as being partial and unjust.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²²³⁷

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Ṭā Hā.²²³⁸

طه ②

^a See 1 : 1.

2237. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2238. Important Words :

طه (Ṭāhā) is a combination of Ṭā and hā. In the dialect of 'Akk, an Arab tribe, it means يا حبيبي *i.e.* O my beloved or يا رجل which means, "O great man", or "O perfect man". The expression طه was so much in vogue among the 'Akk tribe, that one of them would not answer if he were called by the words يا رجل but would only answer if he were addressed as طه (Ṭāhā). The author of Kashshāf interprets it as يا هذا *i.e.* "O you". By some the expression is interpreted as, "be thou at rest" (Qadīr). This last interpretation seems to be quite in harmony with the significance of the next verse, which contains a message of comfort, solace and good cheer for the Holy Prophet (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The combined letters طه point to the fact that the Holy Prophet was gifted, in full measure, with all those natural faculties, qualities and attributes which contribute to the building up of a man's full moral stature. The Holy Prophet was indeed a complete and perfect man in the fullest sense of the word. He possessed in

full measure moral qualities such as boldness and bravery; generosity, beneficence, fidelity, forbearance and fortitude; pity and compassion; self-abnegation, honesty, brotherliness, humility, jealousy, gratitude, hospitality, magnanimity, firmness and steadfastness; dignity and decorum; love and sympathy for relatives and mankind at large; high resolve, patience and power to resist evil; an infinite capacity for hard work; simplicity and truthfulness; love for the poor and the down-trodden, respect for the old and kindness towards the young; an unbounded love for his Creator and complete devotion to Him and trust in Him, etc. A reference to the possession by the Holy Prophet of all the highest moral excellences that a human being is capable of possessing is also to be found in vv. 33 : 22 & 68 : 5.

Moreover, it is of interest to note that whereas the angel who brought the tidings of the birth of a son to Mary has been called بشر (man) in the Qur'ān (19 : 18), implying that Jesus was at best possessed of qualities which a بشر (man) could possess, the use in the present verse of the expression طه (O perfect man) for the Holy Prophet indicates that he possessed in the fullest measure all the moral excellences that a human being is capable of possessing.

3. We have not sent down the Qur'ān to thee that thou shouldst be distressed,²²³⁹

مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ ۝

4. But as an ^aexhortation for him who fears God.²²⁴⁰

إِلَّا تَذَكُّرَةً لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ ۝

5. And a revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens.²²⁴¹

تَنْزِيلًا مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَىٰ ۝

^a 73 : 20; 74 : 55; 76 : 30; 80 : 12.

2239. Commentary :

As hinted above, the present verse contains a message of comfort and hope for the Holy Prophet and Muslims. It means to suggest that it is incompatible with the perfect and unerring Quranic revelation that its bearer should fail in his mission. The cause of the Holy Prophet, therefore, will triumph and his followers after passing through severe trials and tribulations will achieve success, prosperity and glory. This *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca in the very early period of the Call when the Muslims were being mercilessly harassed and harried and the persecution to which they were subjected was very severe and organized and seemed to know no end. Hence the need for these comforting words.

The verse also refutes and rebuts the Christian dogma that the law or the *Shari'at* is a curse. It purports to say that the Law has been revealed as a source of Divine mercy and blessing. There is nothing in it which is repugnant to human nature and which if acted upon should put man into trouble and distress.

2240. Commentary :

The word تَذَكُّرَةً (exhortation) being derived

from ذَكَرَ and meaning eminence and honour (Lane), the verse purports to say that Muslims will achieve honour and eminence by following the teachings of the Qur'ān and that their enemies will come to grief by rejecting it. The expression يَخْشَى (who fears) implies that for achievement of the great and noble object of the establishment of Divine Unity on earth, which the Muslims have in view, the perfect teaching of the Qur'ān alone is not sufficient unless it is accompanied by the purification of their hearts. The verse further says that the Qur'ān not only guides to the right path those who grope in the darkness of doubt and disbelief but also leads the believers to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence and glory.

2241. Commentary :

The verse gives the reason why revelation of the Qur'ān will bring success to the Holy Prophet and his followers. It is that the Qur'ān has been revealed by the Creator of heavens and earth i.e. the Source of all power, and that its teachings possess all those qualities and characteristics that go to make a people strong and powerful.

6. *He is "the Gracious God Who has settled Himself firmly on the Throne."*²²⁴²

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ①

7. *To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and whatsoever is between them, and whatsoever is beneath the moist sub-soil.*²²⁴³

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا

تَحْتَ الثَّرَى ④

8. *And if thou speakest aloud, it makes no difference, for He knows the secret thought and what is yet more hidden.*²²⁴⁴

وَإِنْ تَجْهَرُ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَ وَأَخْفَى ⑤

• 7 : 55; 10 : 4. ① 2 : 285 ; 3 : 130 ; 5 : 19. ④ 2 : 78 ; 6 : 4 ; 11 : 6 ; 67 : 14.

2242. Important Words :

For a detailed explanation of عرش (Throne) see 7 : 55 and 10 : 4. Briefly, the word represents the transcendent attributes of God, i.e. the attributes which are technically known as صفات تنزيهية. These attributes which are eternal and unchangeable and are God's exclusive possession are manifested through God's other attributes which are known as صفات تشبيهية i.e. such attributes as are found more or less in other beings also. The former attributes i.e. transcendent attributes, are said to constitute God's Throne and the latter attributes i.e. صفات تشبيهية are the bearers of His Throne.

Commentary :

The verse continues the theme of the previous and the succeeding verses—the theme of the Almightyness and Majesty of God.

As this Chapter, like its predecessor, *Sūra Maryam*, primarily contains a repudiation of Christian dogmas and doctrines, the Divine attribute الرحمن (the Gracious) has been repeatedly mentioned in both of them because this attribute demolishes the basic Christian doctrine of Atonement. It further points to the fact that the revelation of the Qur'ān, in fact

of all Divine Scriptures, is subject to this attribute. This subject has also been dealt with in some detail in vv. 55 : 2-3.

2243. Important Words :

ثرى (moist sub-soil) is derived from ثرى (thariya). They say ثريت الارض i.e. the earth or land became moist and soft after drought or dryness. ثرى means moisture; humidity of the earth; moist earth. The Arabs say يمس الثرى i.e. the fresh, vigorous friendship between them withered — they became enemies after they were friends. The word also means, good or anything good. They say فلان قريب الثرى i.e. such a one is a person from whom good is easy of attainment. تحت الثرى means, what is beneath the earth (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that as the Qur'ān has been revealed by God Whose dominion and control extend to all that is in the heavens and the earth, so all the celestial and terrestrial forces will be pressed into service to further the cause of Islam.

2244. Commentary :

Whereas the word السر (secret thought) signifies the thoughts that lie hidden in a man's

9. *He is Allah. There is no God but He.* ^aHis are the most beautiful names.²²⁴⁵

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى ⑨

10. ^bAnd has the story of Moses come to thee?²²⁴⁶

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ⑩

^a 7 : 181 ; 59:25. ^b 19 : 52 ; 79 : 16.

breast which he alone knows, the word أخفى (more hidden) comprises all those ideals, thoughts and ambitions of a person which lie hidden in the womb of futurity and have never crossed his mind.

2245. Commentary:

The verse contains the quintessence and kernel of the Quranic revelation referred to in v. 3, above. It is that God exists. He is One. He possesses all perfect attributes and is completely free from all conceivable defects and imperfections and therefore He alone is entitled to our worship and adoration.

2246. Commentary :

موسى (Moses), the Founder of Judaism, lived about 1400 years before Jesus. He was a Law-giving Prophet and the founder of a great religious system. As for the name Moses, it may be briefly stated that موسى (Moses) is really a Hebrew name having definite derivation in both Hebrew and Arabic. In Hebrew it is pronounced and written as משה (Moshe) and means, "a thing drawn out of water" or "saved from water" (Enc. Bib.). See also 2 : 54.

Against all accepted canons of history Freud in his "Moses and Monotheism" has adumbrated quite a novel theory that Moses was not an Israelite and did not belong to the Hebrew stock and also that the Israelites never settled in Egypt. He has advanced the following arguments in support of this strange and baseless claim :-

1. That Moses is an Egyptian name.
2. That the idea of the Oneness of God is originally Egyptian, having been first conceived and adopted by an ancient Egyptian king, named Ikhnaten (or Akhenaten). Moses himself being an Egyptian borrowed it from the Egyptians and preached it among the Israelites.
3. That, being an Egyptian, Moses popularized the Egyptian custom of circumcision as a religious rite among the Israelites.
4. That like the teaching of the Egyptian king, Akhenaten, there is no mention of the life after death in the teachings of Moses which also shows that he was also an Egyptian.
5. That the Egyptians had a very strong dislike for swine and its flesh and that the Israelites developed this dislike as a result of the teaching of Moses.
6. That because Moses was an Egyptian he could not properly express himself in Hebrew.

1. All these arguments possess no basis in fact. As stated above and also in 2 : 54, Moses is certainly a Hebrew word, having derivation both in Hebrew and Arabic. But even if we admit that the name Moses was of Egyptian origin, it does not follow that the man Moses also was an Egyptian. As the Israelites were a subject race in Egypt, living under the

rule of the Pharaohs, it seems quite plausible that they should have adopted Egyptian names. The members of a subject race generally feel a particular delight in adopting the names and imitating the customs, modes of living and dress etc., of their rulers. But the actual fact is that موسى (Moses) is a Hebrew name and Pharaoh's daughter, who very probably gave him that name, must have certainly been influenced to give the child a Hebrew name, as having taken him out of water she thought that he belonged to the Israelite people. It is also possible that the name might have been suggested by Moses's mother or sister.

2. The second argument that the idea of the Oneness of God was originally Egyptian, having been first conceived and adopted by Akhenaten, an ancient Egyptian king, and preached by him among the Israelites, is equally wrong. In the first place it is manifestly unreasonable to suppose that a certain concept is the monopoly of one people. Different peoples may independently form similar ideas without having borrowed them from one another. Secondly, even supposing that the idea of God's Unity is of Egyptian origin, the inference cannot be justified that Moses was an Egyptian. If an American or a German can borrow an idea from an Englishman and *vice versa* why cannot an Israelite borrow an idea from an Egyptian. The truth is that the idea of God's Oneness was neither conceived by Egyptians nor by Syrians or any other people. It has its origin in Divine revelation.

3. The contention that circumcision was an old Egyptian practice and Moses being an Egyptian borrowed it from his people and popularized it among the Israelites also possesses no

substance. Supposing that the practice of circumcision was Egyptian, how does this fact show that Moses was an Egyptian? Do not one people adopt the customs of another people? Could not the Israelites, during their stay in Egypt, have borrowed this practice from the Egyptians, particularly in view of the fact that the Israelites were a subject race and the subject race have a special liking for the ideas and practices of their rulers. In any case it is not a fact that the practice of circumcision was in vogue among the Egyptians alone. According to the Bible, in pursuance of God's command, Abraham had himself and his two sons Ishmael and Isaac circumcised and had made the observance of the rite of circumcision incumbent upon his posterity long before Moses was born (Gen. 17 : 11). This practice was also in vogue among the Arabs who never had good social relations with the Israelites and never had gone to Egypt. Even among the wild tribes of Africa and the aborigines of Australia circumcision is not unknown (Jew. Enc. vol. 4, p. 97 and "Tribes of Central Australia" by Spencer and Gillen, p. 323). The earliest traces of this practice among Egyptians are to be found in the 16th century B.C. (Jew. Enc. vol. 4, p. 97), when the Israelites had already been living there. It can, therefore, be safely inferred that, if at all, the practice was borrowed by the Egyptians from the Israelites and not by the Israelites from the Egyptians. The practice seems to have been introduced into Egypt by the Prophet Joseph who commanded great respect and prestige with Egyptian monarchs. Under his influence it must have become popular among the upper strata of Egyptian society as research scholars are of the view that this practice was much more in vogue among the upper sections of the Egyptian people to which Joseph himself belonged than among the poor classes.

4. Another argument that has been advanced in favour of Moses being an Egyptian is that like the teaching of Akhenaten no reference is to be found in the teachings of Moses about life after death. That this argument is quite weak and flimsy is clear from the fact that Akhenaten has left no book, no teaching and no community of followers from whom his views about life after death might be ascertained. Moreover, there are references to life after death in the teaching of Moses. The Bible says : "And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people" (Deut. 32 : 50) and "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalms 17 : 15). The misconception may have arisen from the absence of any marked emphasis on life after death in the Old Testament. This lack of stress might have been due to the fact that in the course of time the Old Testament had become subject to much interpolation and had been tampered with and many parts of it had been lost during the miseries and misfortunes that overtook the Israelites in the period of their dispersion and captivity. When, however, the Jewish scholars and savants re-edited the Bible, they left out from it those passages which did not quite suit the Jewish temper and genius. The passages dealing with the subject of life after death seem to have been among the parts left out as the Jews, being a particularly worldly-minded people, did not relish its repeated mention.

5. The fifth argument given in support of this thesis is that the Israelites, like the Egyptians, had an extreme dislike for pork. This argument, too, seems to stand on a flimsy ground. Though Egyptians did not like pork, pigs were kept and reared in Egypt and were even offered as sacrifice

at the altars of the Egyptian gods (Enc. Bib. cols. 4825, 4826). Thus the reason for the Egyptians to refrain from slaughtering pigs seems to have been that they considered it a sacred animal unlike the Israelites to whom its eating was forbidden on account of its being filthy and abominable.

6. The sixth argument given in favour of Moses being an Egyptian is that he could not properly speak Hebrew, the language of the Israelites. This argument is based on Exod. 4 : 10 where it is stated that Moses was not eloquent and was slow of speech and of a slow tongue. It is true that Moses suffered from an impediment in his speech and could not freely express himself. But how could the fact that Moses was not fluent and was slow of speech prove that *he was slow of speech in Hebrew* and therefore was not an Israelite. On the contrary, as it appears from the Bible and the Qur'ān, when commanded by God to go to Pharaoh to preach his mission to him, Moses requested to be excused on the plea of his inability to express himself adequately. This fact, if anything, shows that Moses could not freely talk in the tongue which Pharaoh spoke and understood i.e. the Egyptian tongue, and therefore he was not an Egyptian.

In short, there is no reason or justification for supposing that the name Moses is of Egyptian origin or that the man Moses was not an Israelite. The linguistic evidence of Hebrew and Arabic, combined with reason and the evidence of Jewish history and tradition, added to the account of Moses as given in the Bible and the Qur'ān, all go to substantiate and support the fact that Moses was not an Egyptian nor was his name of Egyptian origin.

11. "When he saw a fire, and he said to his family, 'Tarry ye, I perceive a fire; perhaps I may bring you a brand therefrom or find guidance at the fire'.^{2246 A}

اِذْ رَأٰ نَارًا فَقَالَ لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْا اِنِّىۤ اَنْتُمْ نٰصِرًا
تَعَلٰى اَتِيْكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ اَوْ اِجْدُ عَلٰى النَّارِ

هُدًى ۝

* 27 : 8 ; 28 : 30.

2246 A. Important Words:

اَنَسْتُ (I perceived) is derived from اَنَسَ (anisa). They say اَنَسَ بِهِ i.e. he became familiar with him. اَنَسَهُ (ānasa-hū) means, he perceived it ; he saw him or it and looked at him or it ; he heard it, namely a sound ; he felt it ; he was sensible of it ; he knew it ; he had certain knowledge of it ; he was acquainted with it. اَنَسْتُ مِنْهُ الرُّشْدَ means, I knew him to be characterised by maturity of intelligence and rectitude of actions and good management of affairs (Lane & Aqrab).

قَبَسَ (brand). They say قَبَسَ مِنْهُ نَارًا i. e. he took fire from him. قَبَسَ النَّارَ means, he lighted or kindled the fire. قَبَسَ means fire, or live coal ; a brand or a firebrand ; a piece of fire which one takes upon the end of a stick (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Opinions differ as to what it was that Moses actually saw. In fact it was a vision that he had seen. The language of metaphor which has been used in this account of Moses also lends support to the view that he had only seen a vision and that he himself was conscious of the fact that he had seen no fire of wood or coal. If he had actually seen a material fire of wood, Moses would have used the words "I perceive *the* fire" and not the words "I perceive *a* fire", as he did.

Visions, however, are of two kinds: (a) those that concern only an individual. In such visions the Divine manifestation which is called جُلُوْهُ (manifestation shown to God's beloved other than the Prophets) in the spiritual terminology remains confined to the concerned individual. (b) Visions in which جُلُوْهُ نُبُوْۤتٍ (manifestation shown to the Prophets) is shown, the Divine manifestation extends also to the Prophet's people.

By the words, "perhaps I may bring you a brand therefrom or find guidance at the fire", Moses meant to say that if it were جُلُوْهُ نُبُوْۤتٍ that he had seen, then he would be given a new *Sharī'at* for his people but if it were only جُلُوْهُ وَلَايَةٍ he would receive some guidance for his own spiritual advancement.

It may be of interest to note that fire is of three kinds; (a) that which has light and also burns ; (b) that which has no light but it burns and (c) that which has light but does not burn. The fire which Moses had seen seemed to belong to the last category.

The word "tarry" implies that Moses wanted privacy for communion with God, therefore he asked his family to remain behind.

According to the Qur'an the incident to which reference has been made in this verse took place after Moses had completed his ten years of service with Shu'aib in Midian and was

12. ^aAnd when he came to it, he was called *by a voice*, 'O Moses,

13. 'Verily, I am thy Lord. So take off thy shoes; ^bfor thou art in the sacred valley of Tuwa;²²⁴⁷

14. ^cAnd I have chosen thee; so hearken to what is revealed *to thee*;

15. ^dVerily, I am Allah; there is no God beside Me. So serve Me, and observe Prayer for My remembrance;²²⁴⁸

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يُمُوسَى^{١٢}

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ

طَوًى^{١٣}

وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَى^{١٤}

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ

الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي^{١٥}

^a 27 : 9 ; 28 : 31 ; 79 : 17. ^b 20 : 81 ; 28 : 31 ; 79 : 17. ^c 20 : 42. ^d 27 : 10 ; 28 : 31.

actually on his way to Egypt with his wife and not as the Bible says that it occurred before he left for Egypt and was staying with Shu'aib and that when one day he led the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, to the back side of the desert and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (Exod. 3: 1-3). Consideration of all the relevant facts of geography contradicts this Biblical account as the Lord appeared to Moses on mount Horeb which is in the desert of Sinai hundreds of miles away from Midian; and Moses after having had this experience could not possibly have gone back to Jethro, with the flock to apprise him of it the same evening as the Biblical account implies. Thus the Quranic account, is more in accordance with reason and facts of geography than the Biblical account. According to it the incident occurred after Moses had left Midian for good.

2247. Commentary :

As stated above it was a vision that Moses had seen and "shoes", in the language of visions signifies worldly relations such as wife, children,

friends etc. نعليك (thy two shoes) signifies, thy relations with thy family and those with thy people and community. Thus the verse purports to say that at the time of close communion with God Moses was commanded to banish from his mind all thoughts of wife and children and of other worldly connections. Taken literally the verse would mean that as Moses was in a sacred place he was bidden to take off his shoes.

The word *Tuwā* meaning twice blessed (Lane), the significance of the verse may be that Moses in that state of communion with God stood in a valley doubly blessed, one end of which, as it were, reached to God and the other end to mankind.

2248. Commentary :

The verse contains the first commandment that was given to Moses. It appears that the observance of Prayer is the most important commandment in religion.

The words *for My remembrance* may mean :

(a) for My remembering you i.e. as I have remembered you, therefore, you should

16. "Surely, the Hour is coming and I am going to manifest it, that every soul may be recompensed according to its endeavour;²²⁴⁹

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ ①٩

17. 'So let not him who believes not therein and follows his own evil inclinations, turn thee away therefrom, lest thou perish;²²⁵⁰

فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ
هُوَ ۖ فَتَرَدَّىٰ ②٤

18. 'And what is that in thy right hand, O Moses?'

وَمَا تِلْكَ يَمِينُكَ يَا مُوسَىٰ ③٨

* 15 : 86; 40 : 60.

also remember *Me* by way of thanksgiving;

(b) your Prayer should be for the sake of remembering *Me*;

(c) you should set up the institution of Prayer so that My remembrance may become established in the world.

2249. Important Words :

أُخْفِيهَا (I am going to manifest it) is derived from خَفَى which has two contrary significations : خَفَى الشَّيْءُ (*khafiya*) means, the thing was or became hidden, concealed or covered. خَفَى الشَّيْءُ (*khafa*) means, he made the thing apparent, manifest, plain or evident. They say خَفَى الْمَطَرُ *i.e.* the rain made the rats come forth from the holes. أَخْفَى الشَّيْءُ means, he removed خَفَاءَ (covering) of the thing. The Quranic expression أَخْفِيهَا means, I am almost making it to appear; I am almost removing that which covers it *i.e.* I am going to manifest it (Lane & Aqrab). The expression may also mean, I am going to keep it concealed.

السَّاعَةُ (the Hour) may mean the Day of

Resurrection ; or the time of triumph of the cause of Moses and that of the discomfiture and destruction of his enemies.

Commentary :

Moses is here told that when he preached his Divine Mission, he will be opposed and persecuted but no opposition or persecution will be allowed to impede or arrest the progress of his cause, and that the signs foretelling the death and destruction of those who stood in his way will become increasingly manifest.

The verse may also mean that the time of the destruction of the enemies of Moses will remain hidden so that when the Divine punishment overtook them all of a sudden, they will become completely non-plussed and will not know what to do.

2250. Important Words :

The pronoun *ها* in *عنها* (therefrom) and *بها* (therein) may refer to (a) "the hour" and (b) the Prayer and worship of God; or in *عنها* it may refer to Prayer and worship of God, and in *بها* to "the hour".

19. He replied, 'This is my rod, I lean on it, and beat down there-with leaves for my sheep, and I have also other uses for it'.²²⁵¹

20. He said, "Cast it down, O Moses".^{2251A}

21. So he cast it down, and behold! it was a serpent running.²²⁵²

قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا عَلَيْهَا وَاهْتَسُّ بِهَا

عَلَى غَنِيِّ وَلِيِّ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرَى ۝١٩

قَالَ اَلْقُهَا يٰمُوسَى ۝٢٠

فَالْقُهَا فَاِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى ۝٢١

7 : 118 ; 26 : 33 ; 27 : 11 ; 28 : 32.

2251. Important Words :

عصا (rod). عصا الرجل means, he beat the man with a rod. عصا القوم means, he brought together the people, or he made them agree on some matters of common concern. عصا means, a rod strong enough to support the weight of a man; communal and family life ; a community; the shin-bone. شق العصا means, he separated himself from the community. شقرا عصا المسلمين means, they caused a split in the ranks of the Muslim community (Aqrab & Lane).

مآرب (uses) is the plural of مأربة which is derived from أرب (ariba). They say أرب بالشئى i.e. he became devoted to the thing. أرب اليه means, he wanted it and sought it. أربة او به means, want ; intellect. غير اولى الاربة means, idiots; persons deficient in intellect; persons such as have no need of women. مآرب means, wants, uses, needs, requirements, purposes (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

God had only asked Moses what was in his hand. Moses did not confine himself to giving a direct reply, viz., that it was only a rod that he had held in his hand but also went on to enumerate some of its uses. It may be that taking advantage of his communion with the Divine Being Moses desired to prolong the blessed talk.

As stated above it was a vision that Moses had seen and "rod" in the language of visions signifies a Prophet's own community or people and "sheep" signifies those who do not actually belong to his community but only are under his care and protection. Moses's reply meant that he not only invited and welcomed the help of his own people and relied upon their support in the furtherance of his own cause but also looked after the interests of other people who were under his protection but did not actually belong to his community.

2251 A. Commentary :

The verse means to say that if Moses cast his people away i.e. if he gave up looking after their spiritual welfare, the dreadful consequences that are mentioned in the next verse would inevitably follow.

2252. Commentary :

حية (serpent). The Qur'ān has used three different words for describing the turning of the rod of Moses into a serpent, viz, حية as in the verse under comment ; جان as in 27 : 11 and 28 : 32; and ثعبان as in 7 : 108 and 26 : 33. The word حية is of general application and is used for all categories of serpents; جان means a small serpent; and ثعبان generally means a bulky and long serpent. These words apparently seem to have been used haphazardly at

22. *God* said, 'Catch hold of it, and fear not. We shall restore it to its former condition';²²⁵³

قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا

الْأُولَى ٢٢

23. "And draw thy hand closer under thy arm-pit, it shall come forth white, without any disease—another Sign";²²⁵⁴

وَاضْمُرْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ

غَيْرِ سَوْءٍ آيَةٌ أُخْرَى ٢٣

^a 7 : 109 ; 27 : 13 ; 28 : 33.

various places in the Qur'ān, but in reality there is no haphazardness, or arbitrariness since the word *جان* has been used from the point of view of the serpent's quick movements and *ثعبان* from the point of view of its large size. Moreover, when the mere fact of the turning of the rod into a serpent is mentioned the word *حية* is used, but when the rod turns into a serpent in the presence of Moses alone the word *جان* (a small serpent) is used. When, however, the miracle of the rod turning into a serpent is shown in public before Pharaoh, the magicians and the people, the word *ثعبان* (a large and bulky serpent) is used. The significance of these different words on different occasions would be different. The word *حية* (root-word *حي*) signifies that a dead people (*عصا*) as, to all intents and purposes, the Israelites were, would receive a new and vigorous life through Moses and the word *جان* (a small, fast moving serpent) signifies that from a small and decadent community, they would make rapid progress and would become *ثعبان* (a large and bulky serpent) for Pharaoh and his people *i.e.* they would become the means and instrument of their destruction.

The verse purports to say, and the history of the Israelites bears testimony to the fact, that whenever Moses happened to become separated from his people they became, as it were, serpents *i.e.* they relapsed into idol-worship and other abominable practices.

For an exhaustive explanation of the miracle of the rod turning into a serpent and its spiritual significance see 7: 108. Suffice it to say here that it was a vision which Moses had seen and in which Pharaoh, his courtiers and the magicians were also made to share. The rod did not actually turn into a serpent but was merely made to appear like one. It, therefore, contradicted or contravened no law of nature.

2253. Commentary :

Moses is here comforted that his people would not remain permanently wedded to idolatry and other evil practices but the instant they came under his fostering care, they would again become his good and God-fearing companions. See also 7 : 108.

2254. Important Words :

يدي (thy hand). *يد* is derived from *يَدِي* (*yada*). *يَدِي الرَّجُل* means, he hit or hurt the hand of the man ; he did a good to him. *يَدِي فُلَانٍ مِنْ فُلَانٍ* (*yadiya*) means, such a one received a favour or bounty from such a one. *يد* means, hand or arm; and figuratively means, favour, benefit, bounty or beneficence ; power, dominion, control, authority or assistance ; help, protection; troop, host, army ; shame, disgrace; duration, length; community, party; etc. *سَقَطَ فِي يَدَيْهِ* means, he felt ashamed; he was smitten with remorse; *أَعْطَى بِيَدِهِ* means, he obeyed and submitted; *يَدِي هَذَا* means, this is under my possession or authority. *يَدُ الطَّائِرِ* means, the wing of the bird ; *يَدُ الزَّمَانِ*

24. 'That We may show thee some of Our greater Signs.'²²⁵⁵

25. 'Go thou to Pharaoh; he has indeed exceeded *all* bounds.'²²⁵⁶

26. *Moses* said, 'My Lord, open out for me my breast.'²²⁵⁷

لِيُرِيكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَى ۖ

إِذْ هَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَفَرٌ ۖ

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ۖ

means, the length or duration of the time. يد الله مع الجماعة means, the help or protection of God is with the community (Aqrah).

جناح (arm-pit) means, wing; hand; upper arm or arm from the shoulder to the elbow, edge; side; wing of an army; protection; a part or position of a thing; a community or people (Lane & Aqrah). See also 17 : 25.

Commentary :

One of the meanings of يد (hand) as stated above under "Important Words" is, a community or people. According to this meaning the expression واخضع يدك الى جناحك contains an injunction for Moses that he should always keep his people close to him and under his fostering care. If he did so they would become highly righteous men, radiating spiritual light and would be free from all evil.

يد بيضاء (white hand) may also signify clear and strong arguments. Moses was endowed with strong and solid arguments to prove his case. See also 7 : 109 & 26 : 33-34.

2255. Commentary :

The Sign of the rod was one of the greatest heavenly Signs given to Moses. When Moses was entrusted with prophethood, the Sign of the rod appeared (20 : 20). When he went to preach his Message to Pharaoh, it was again the miracle of the rod that was shown to him and the sorcerers (20 : 70-74). When the Israelites wanted water, Moses was ordered to strike the rock with his rod (2 : 61), and when he had to cross the sea, God commanded him to strike it with his rod (26 : 64).

The verse may signify that after the Signs of the "rod" and the "white hand," God promised to show to Moses yet greater Signs. One of these latter Signs was that Pharaoh and his mighty hosts were drowned in the sea before the very eyes of the Israelites. According to the Qur'an altogether 9 Signs were shown for Moses (7:131-134) whereas the Bible gives their number as 13. For a detailed discussion about the disparity in the account of the Bible and that of the Qur'an see 7 : 134 & 17 : 102. Suffice it to say here that the Signs were really 9 in number; the Bible has only unnecessarily enlarged their number.

2256. Commentary :

Moses now receives his commission to go to Pharaoh as a Messenger of God. The words, *he has indeed exceeded all bounds*, show that by his misdeeds Pharaoh had already incurred God's wrath and had made himself deserving of Divine punishment. But, God, out of His mercy, sent Moses to him in order to warn him of the impending punishment if he did not give up his evil ways and to give him a last opportunity to repent and reform.

2257. Commentary :

The present and the following few verses show that at first Moses did not feel himself equal to the great task which was entrusted to him. They also shed some light on the necessary qualifications that a preacher should possess in order to succeed in his mission. The following are some of them :

27. 'And make my task easy for me;

وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ﴿٢٧﴾

28. "And loose the knot of my tongue;²²⁵⁸

وَأَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي ﴿٢٨﴾

29. 'That they may understand my speech;

يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ﴿٢٩﴾

30. 'And grant me a helper from my family—²²⁵⁹

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٣٠﴾

31. "Aaron, my brother;

هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣١﴾

^a 26 : 14.

(a) He must be inspired with zeal and enthusiasm for his mission and must possess strong arguments to support his cause (v : 26) ; (b) his teachings must be easy of comprehension (v : 27); (c) he should be a good speaker (v : 28); (d) he should always be on the look out for favourable opportunities for his discourse to be listened to with attention and respect (v : 29); and (e) if possible he may have a good companion to share his responsibility and burden (v : 30).

2258. Commentary :

Moses seems to have suffered from an impediment in his tongue. He does not appear to be an eloquent speaker. But it is not eloquence alone that makes a man a successful preacher. More than that it is conviction in the truth of one's mission and one's zeal for that mission and readiness to suffer for it, that greatly make up for the deficiency of fluency. Moses possessed these things in full measure. This is why, in spite of the weakness of which he himself was conscious, he made a very effective and convincing speech before Pharaoh and his court.

2259. Important Words :

وزير (helper) is derived from وزر (wazara). وزر الرجل means, he bore the thing. وزر الرجل means, the man carried a weight which

burdened his back. وزر الرجل means, he overcame or overwhelmed the man. وزر also means, he sinned. وزير means, helper; one who helps a person in carrying his burden; a minister who helps the king by his counsel in conducting the affairs of the State (Aqrab).

Commentary :

What a contrast between Moses and the Holy Prophet Muhammad! Whereas Moses here asks for a helper for the discharge of a lighter responsibility, the Holy Prophet who was entrusted with an infinitely heavier and more onerous task never prayed to be given an assistant. He, alone, unhelpt and unassisted, discharged fully and completely the responsibility of raising a people, sunk deep into the depths of moral turpitude, to the highest pinnacles of spiritual glory. Even in moments of mortal danger he was never discouraged or dismayed. The brave words which he uttered on the battle-field of Hunain when he was left alone surrounded by blood-thirsty enemies and sure death stared him in the face, viz., انا النبي لا كذب انا ابن عبدالمطلب "I am the Prophet of God, there is no untruth about it, I am the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib," (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Jihād wa'l Siyar*) have resounded through the centuries.

32. 'Increase my strength with him;²²⁶⁰

33. "And make him share my task;

34. 'That we may glorify Thee much ;

35. 'And remember Thee much ;

36. 'Thou possessest full knowledge of us'.

37. ^bGod said, "Granted is thy prayer, O Moses,²²⁶¹

38. "And We did indeed confer a favour upon thee at another time also;

39. "When ^cWe revealed to thy mother what was an *important* revelation, saying,²²⁶²

أَشْدُدْ يَدِي أَرْزِي ۝

وَأَشْرِكُهُ فِي أَمْرِي ۝

كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ۝

وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ۝

إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ۝

قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يُمُوسَى ۝

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى ۝

إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ ۝

^a 28 : 35 ^b 26 : 16 ^c 28 : 8-9.

2260. Important Words :

أَرْزِي (my strength) ; أَرْز (azrun) is derived from أَزَرَ (azara). They say أَرْزَهُ *i.e.*, it surrounded or encompassed it. أَرْزَهُ and أَرْزَهُ (azzara) means, he strengthened him or it. أَرْزَهُ (āzara) means, he aided, assisted or helped him and strengthened him. أَرْزَ الزَّرْعَ بَعْضُهُ means, the seed-produce became tangled or luxuriant, one part reaching to another, and one part strengthening another. أَرْزَ and أَرْزَ (azzara) and أَرْزَ (āzara) are also used synonymously. أَرْزَ (azrun) means, strength; weakness; back; aid, assistance or help. They say شَدَّدَ أَرْزَهُ *i.e.* he strengthened his back. أَشْدَدْ بِهِ أَرْزِي means, (a) strengthen Thou by him my back ; (b) strengthen Thou by him

my weakness, and (c) through him add Thou to my strength (Lane & Aqrab).

2261. Important Words :

سُؤْلَ (prayer) is derived from سَأَلَ which means, he asked for ; he begged, he prayed or petitioned. سُؤْلَ means, a thing asked for; a prayer; a petition (Aqrab & Lane).

2262. Important Words :

In مَا يُوحَىٰ (an important revelation), مَا being مَصْدَرِيَّةٌ turns the verb following it into an infinitive and imparts to it an intensiveness of meaning. Thus the expression مَا يُوحَىٰ means, an important revelation or what it was necessary to be revealed at that time.

40. “‘Put him in the ark, and place it into the river, then the river will cast it on to the bank, and *one who is an enemy to me and also an enemy to him will take him up.*’ And I wrapped thee with love from Me ; and *this I did* that thou mightest be reared before My eye.²²⁶³

41. “^bWhen thy sister walked along and said, ‘Shall I guide you to one who will take charge of him?’ So ‘We restored thee to thy mother that her eye might be cooled and she might not grieve. And ^dthou didst kill a man, but We delivered thee from sorrow. Then We tried thee with various trials. And thou didst tarry *several* years among the people of Midian. Then thou camest up to the standard, O Moses.²²⁶⁴

أَنِ اقْدِ فِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْدِ فِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ
الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوْلَهُ وَ
الْقَيْثُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةٌ مِّمِّيَّةٌ وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي ۝

إِذْ تَتَشَىٰ أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُ
فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَوَقَلَّتْ
نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ
سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ۚ ثُمَّ رَجِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يُّوسَىٰ ۝

^a 28 : 9. ^b 28 : 12-13. ^c 28 : 14. ^d 26 : 15; 28 : 16, 34.

2263. Important Words :

For التابوت see 2 : 249.

عَيْنِي (My eye). عَيْن means, (1) the eye ; (2) look or view ; (3) the people or inmates of a house or dwelling ; (4) brothers from the same father and mother ; (5) protection or honour (Lane). The expression عَلَى عَيْنِي means, before my eyes, or, under my protection. See also 11 : 38.

تُصْنَع (be reared) is derived from صَنَعَ. They say صَنَعَ الشَّيْءَ i.e. he made the thing. صَنَعَ الْفَرَسَ means, he looked after the horse. صَنَعَ ابْنَتَهُ means, he properly brought up his daughter. The expression صَنَعَ عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي means, before my eyes, or, under my protection. See also 11 : 38. صَنَعَ (sun'un) means, to do a thing properly and well. اصْطَنَعَ الشَّيْءَ means, he ordered the thing to be prepared for him. اصْطَنَعَهُ means, he taught him and trained and brought him up. اصْطَنَعَ عَنْدَهُ صَنِيعَةً means, he did him a favour. اصْطَنَعَ لِنَفْسِهِ means, he chose him for himself. اصْطَنَعَ means, to mend or reform a thing thoroughly and well (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As Moses was to have been entrusted with the great and difficult task of delivering a people held in bondage for long by a cruel and powerful monarch, it was necessary that he should have received the requisite training for the great mission under royal tutors and teachers. So it was in fulfilment of this Divine plan that he found his way into Pharaoh's own house.

The reference in the verse is to the Biblical narrative. See Exod. 2 : 1-10.

The expression فَلْيُلْقِهِ is in the imperative mood and signifies command, meaning, We commanded that the river should cast it on to the bank.

2264. Important Words :

قَدَر (standard) is inf. noun from قَدَر (qadara). قَدَرْتُ الشَّيْءَ means, I measured the thing; computed or determined its quantity,

42. "And "I have chosen thee for
Myself.²²⁶⁵

وَأَصْطَنَيْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي ۖ

^a 20 : 14.

measure, size, value, worth, bulk, proportion. extent, amount, limit or number. قدر (*qadrun*) or قدر (*qadarun*) is the quantity, quantum. measure, magnitude, size, bulk, proportion and extent, of a thing. They say جاء على قدر *i.e.*, it came according to measure or as it may be said, he came up to the standard (Aqrab, Mufradāt & Lane). See also 15 : 61.

Commentary :

In what a wonderful way God fulfilled the promise He had made to Moses's mother (when He commanded her to cast him into the river) that he would be restored to her (28 : 8)! God so managed the whole affair that the baby was soon again in the loving arms of his mother. It is in this way that God demonstrates not only His existence, but also His knowledge and shows His supreme control over all things and it is events like these that inspire a living faith in the hearts of God's loving and sincere votaries. And it was that living faith which made Moses's mother cast her baby into the river which was amply rewarded by Moses being restored to her very soon.

The words فَبَاكَ فِتْنًا (We tried thee with various trials) mean that Moses was made to pass through the crucible of trials and tribulations so that his mettle might be tested, and after passing out of these ordeals with flying colours he might be declared fit to be endowed with God's great gifts and favours.

Midian or Madyan is the name of a town on the east side of the Gulf of 'Akaba. The name is connected with that of the tribe of Midianites. In the 6th century Ya'qūbī speaks of its position

in a district rich in springs, gardens and date-groves. Istakhrī describes from his own observation the spring in the town from which Moses watered the flocks of Shu'aib. It was then covered by a house which had been built over it. The town had then shown signs of gradual decay and decline. In the 12th century Idrīsī says, "It is an unimportant little trading centre with scanty resources." In the 14th century Abu'l-Fidā saw that it was in ruins. In recent times it has been visited by Ruppell, Burton and Musil. The extensive ruins which the Arabs call Maghair Shu'aib after the cave-tombs lie about 16 miles east of the port of Makna, in the southern part of the valley of Al-Bad' which is rich in streams and palms and other trees. According to Burton the whole district between 29° 28' and 27° 40' is called Arḍ Madyan (Enc. of Islam under "Madyan").

The town lay on the trade-route from Medina to Syria and caravans going to Syria or Egypt passed through it.

The sojourn of Moses among the people of Midian fulfilled yet another Divine plan. As he was destined to live with the Israelites in the deserts and forests of the valley of Sinai, he was made to become used to a hard life by living for several years in Midian.

2265. Important Words :

اصْطَنَيْتُكَ (I have chosen thee). For اصْطَنِعَ see 20 : 40.

The verse signifies that God chose Moses for the great and difficult task of delivering a broken and crushed people from a heartless tyranny.

43. ^a“Go, thou and thy brother, with My Signs, and slacken not in remembering Me.”²²⁶⁶

44. ^b“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed *all* bounds.

45. “But speak to him a gentle speech, haply he might heed or fear.”^{2266A}

46. They replied, “Our Lord, we fear lest he commit some excess against us, or exceed *all* bounds in transgression’.”²²⁶⁷

إِذْ هَبْ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تَنِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴿٣٦﴾

إِذْ هَبَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيْسًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾

قَالَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ

يَطْغَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a 28 : 36. ^b 79 : 18. ^c 26 : 13.

2266. Important Words :

لا تنيا (slacken not) is derived from ونى which means, he was or became languid, remiss, weak, feeble or faint. ونى فيه means, he entered upon a thing languidly or weakly ; توانى فى الامر, he flagged or was remiss in the affair ; ونى عنه, he passed from it and left it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words, *and slacken not in remembering Me*, show that prayer and constant remembrance of God are greatly helpful in attaining success. They constitute the spiritual means which one must employ along with physical and material means for the furtherance and success of one's cause. They are as essential as the physical means.

God's command to Moses and Aaron to adopt these means, although He had promised them His help, makes it abundantly clear that the promise of Divine help does not absolve one of the obligation to use those means which God has created for the attainment of a certain object. God wants us to use all legitimate means that lie in our power for the accom-

plishment of our object and leave the rest to Him.

2266 A. Important Words :

لعل (that haply he might). لعل when expressing hope or fear is not used with regard to God. Hope or fear combined with expectation expressed by لعل pertains sometimes to the speaker and sometimes to the person spoken of and sometimes to the addressee. In the verse under comment it expresses hope on the part of Moses and Aaron meaning that they should preach the Divine Message to Pharaoh hoping that he might accept it. When used about God it signifies certainty. See also 2 : 22 & 11 : 13.

Commentary :

The verse teaches a two-fold lesson to religious teachers and preachers. A religious teacher must use gentle language when preaching his Message. He should also show due respect to those whom God has endowed with worldly honour or whom He has placed in the seat of authority.

2267. Important Words :

يفرط (commit excess) is derived from فرط which means, he preceded; went before; was or

47. *God* said, "Fear not; for I am with you both. I hear and I see."²²⁶⁸

48. "So go ye both to him and say, 'We are the Messengers of thy Lord; so let the children of Israel go with us; and afflict them not. We have, indeed, brought thee a *great* Sign from thy Lord; and peace shall be on him who follows the guidance;²²⁶⁹

49. 'It has, indeed, been revealed to us that punishment shall come on him who rejects *the Message of God* and turns away'."

50. *Pharaoh* said, "Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?"

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْعُ وَأَرَى ۝٢٧

فَأْتِيهِ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى ۝٢٨

إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَىٰ مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ۝٢٩

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يُوسَى ۝٣٠

^a 26 : 24.

became first or foremost; had priority or precedence. *فرط عليه* means, he hastened to do him an evil action; he acted hastily and unjustly towards him; he did to him what was hateful or evil; he annoyed him. *فرط عليه في القول* means, he exceeded the due bounds or just limits towards him in speech. The expression *اننا نخاف ان يفرط* means, we fear that he may act hastily and unjustly towards us, or that he may hastily do to us an evil action or that he may hasten to punish us. *أفرط عليه* means, he acted insolently towards him. *أفرط على الرجل* means, he burdened the man with what he could not bear (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Moses and Aaron are represented here as saying that Pharaoh might do them some harm or that he might exceed proper bounds in his talk about God *i.e.* might use derogatory language about God.

2268. Commentary :

The verse means: When in distress you will call Me, I will hear your prayer and help you and when there will be a possibility of your being overtaken unawares I will look after you and protect you.

2269. Commentary :

"A great Sign" in this verse may be taken as referring to the whole teaching or Message of Moses because he had already shown two Signs to Pharaoh—the Sign of the rod and of the white hand, and not one. The word *الهدى* *i.e.* "guidance" also seems to support the above significance of "a Sign." Thus *آية* signifies the whole teaching of Moses and not a particular part of it or one or two of his miracles. Or the word may refer to the promise of peace and security which God had given to Moses and of Divine punishment with which Pharaoh had been threatened.

51. He said, 'Our Lord is He "Who gave unto everything its *proper* form *and* then guided it to its *proper* function."²²⁷⁰

52. Pharaoh said, 'What then will be the fate of the former generations?'²²⁷¹

53. He said, 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord *preserved* in a Book. My Lord neither errs ^bnor forgets."²²⁷²

54. ^a*It is He* Who has made the earth for you a cradle, and has caused pathways for you to run through it; and Who sends down rain from the sky and thereby We bring forth various kinds of vegetation in pairs.²²⁷³

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى ۝٥١

قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَى ۝٥٢

قَالَ عَلِمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى ۝٥٣

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَاسْلَكْ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْ تَبَاتٍ شَتَّى ۝٥٤

^a 87 : 3-4. ^b 19 : 65. ^c 43 : 11.

2270. Commentary :

The verse means to say that there exists a perfect order in the world and that God has endowed everything with the qualities and attributes which are best suited to its particular requirements and needs and by making proper use of which it can attain to its fullest development.

Pharaoh seems to be a polytheistic philosopher. Moses has here drawn his attention to the Oneness and Unity of God.

2271. Commentary :

Moses's reply to Pharaoh's query contained in the previous verse seemed to have entirely confounded him (Pharaoh), so he adroitly turned away from the subject which he himself had started and put Moses a new question. He asked Moses whether his God knew anything about the former generations who were dead and gone, meaning how they would fare when

they had not had the benefit of receiving guidance from him (Moses). Thus in a subtle manner Pharaoh sought to incite his people against Moses by making an oblique hint that he (Moses) regarded their forefathers as bereft of Heavenly guidance and therefore deserving of Divine punishment.

2272. Commentary :

Moses gives a crushing reply to Pharaoh's evasive tactics. He tells Pharaoh that he should not bother about the former generations. His God knew all about them and every detail concerning them was well preserved in His knowledge and on the Day of Resurrection He would requite them all according to their deeds and actions, taking into consideration their particular conditions and circumstances.

2273. Commentary :

The word أزواجًا (in pairs) points to a profound scientific truth which has only recently been

55. "Eat ye and pasture your cattle. Verily, in this are Signs for those endowed with reason."²²⁷⁴

كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي

الْبَصَرِ ۝٥٥

3 56. ^bFrom this *earth* have We created you, and into it shall We cause you to return, and from it shall We bring you forth once more."²²⁷⁵

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ

تَارَةً أُخْرَى ۝٥٦

^a10 : 25; 25 : 50; 32 : 28. ^b7 : 26; 71 : 18-19

discovered, viz., that there are pairs in the vegetable world as there are pairs in the animal world. Long before this scientific truth was discovered the Qur'ān had stated it. It has further stated that *all* objects have been created in pairs (51 : 50). Science seems to be moving in the direction pointed by the Qur'ān. Its discoveries in organic and inorganic matter have been increasingly supporting and substantiating the truth enunciated by the Qur'ān centuries ago.

The verse under comment continues the argument begun in the previous verse, viz., that just as physical rain gives life to plants and vegetation, similarly water of Divine revelation is indispensable for the spiritual life of man.

2274. Important Words :

النهي (reason) is derived from نهى (naha). They say نهاه عن كذا i.e. he forbade him to do such a thing. نهى (nuhā) is the plural of نهية (nuhyatun) which means, reason. It is so called because reason restrains a man from doing what is bad and from all that which is contrary to reason and common sense (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The truths narrated in the previous verse constitute "Signs" or proofs of the existence

of God. They also prove the need of Divine revelation, because they show that if God has made so much provision for the physical needs of man, He must have made similar provision for his spiritual needs also.

2275. Commentary :

The words, *into it shall We cause you to return*, give rise to a natural question, viz., where does human soul go after man dies and his body decays and is completely dissolved? The answer to this question as given by the Qur'ān is that human soul acquires a new body after its departure from its physical habitat and also an abode according to the nature of the deeds which man may have done during his life on earth. Man's real sepulchre is the place to which God consigns his soul after death according to his works in this life. It is not the pit in which his dead body is placed. It is an abode of happiness or misery according to his spiritual condition.

The sentence, *And from this earth shall We bring you forth once more*, points to the supreme truth that man's life does not end with the extinction and dissolution of his physical body, as it is pregnant with too big an import to end with the latter's decay and death. If life had no great purpose God would not have created it, and after

57. And "We did show him (Pharaoh) Our Signs, all of them; but he rejected them and refused to believe."²²⁷⁶

58. He said, "Hast thou come to us, O Moses, to drive us out of our land by thy magic?"²²⁷⁷

59. "But we shall assuredly bring thee magic the like thereof; so make an appointment between us and thyself which we shall not fail to keep—neither we nor thou—at a place alike for us both".²²⁷⁸

وَلَقَدْ أَرَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى ۝٥٧

قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ

يُمُوسَى ۝٥٨

فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِثْلِهِ فَأَجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ
مَوْعِدًا لَا نُخْلِفُهُ نَحْنُ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا

سَوًى ۝٥٩

^a 27 : 13-15 ; 43 : 48-49; 79 : 21-22. ^b 26 : 36. ^c 7 : 112; 113; 26 : 37-40.

having created it He would not have made it subject to death unless there had been an after life. So if death were the end of all life, then the creation of man would have been "a mere sport and pastime" and this would have constituted a great reflection on the wisdom of God. The fact that God, the Source of all wisdom and intelligence, has done all this shows that He has not created man to return to dust after a life of merely 60 or 70 years but, on the contrary, He has created him for a better, fuller and everlasting life which he must live after he has shed the encumbrances of his physical tabernacle.

The verse also embodies a refutation of the religious beliefs of Pharaoh's people who worshipped the stars.

2276. Commentary:

The word **أَبَى** besides the meaning given in the text also means, he hated or disliked. According to this meaning the verse shows that Pharaoh not only rejected the Divine Signs but also held them up to scorn and looked down upon them with contempt and disdain.

2277. Commentary :

This verse seems to refer to an insidious device of Pharaoh. He told his people that Moses who was a foreigner in Egypt was seeking to turn the ruling dynasty out of Egypt by his clever manoeuvres. He accused Moses of rebellion and revolt against the constituted authority and of aspiring to the leadership of the Egyptians. Thus apprehending in the rise of Moses a threat to his own power and prestige he sought to incite his people against him and thus turn his personal enmity against him into national hatred.

In this verse Pharaoh leaves out Aaron and addresses only Moses. He seems to have regarded Aaron as too insignificant to be considered worthy of notice.

2278. Important Words :

سَوًى (equal) is derived from **سَوَى** (*saviya*). They say **سَوَى الرَّجُلِ** i.e. the affair of the man became established. **سَاوَاهُ** means, it was or became equal to it and like it in measure, extent, size, quantity or amount and in value, etc. **سَوَى** (*siwan*) or **سَوَى** (*suwan*) means, equal; or

60. *Moses* said, "Your appointment shall be the day of the festival, and let the people be assembled when the sun is risen high."²²⁷⁹

61. Then Pharaoh withdrew and concerted his plan and then came to the place of appointment.²²⁸⁰

62. *Moses* said to them, 'Woe to you, forge not a lie against Allah, lest He destroy you utterly by some punishment and, surely, he who forges a lie shall perish.'²²⁸¹

63. Then they argued their affair among themselves and conferred in secret.²²⁸²

قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الزَّيْنَةِ وَأَنْ يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ

ضَحَى ④

فَتَوَلَّى فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَتَى ⑤

قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ افْتَرَى ⑥

فَتَنَازَعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسْرُوا النَّجْوَى ⑦

α 26 : 39.

equal in respect of its two extremities; uniform or even; equi-distant or midway between two parties or two places; *مَكَانًا سَوِيًّا* also means, a marked place (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 109 and 19 : 11.

The verse shows that Pharaoh possessed some sense of fairness. He seems to act with justice and impartiality in regard to the controversy that was to take place between Moses and the magicians.

2279. Commentary :

It seems a curious analogy that whereas the contest between Moses and the magicians in which they were fully and finally routed took place at the time of *ضَحَى*, the Holy Prophet also entered Mecca as a conqueror at the time of *ضَحَى* which marked the final defeat of disbelief and idolatry in Arabia.

The day of festival seemed to be the holy day of the people of Pharaoh when they were expected to assemble in large numbers and to behave with unusual dignity and decorum.

2280. Commentary :

The expression *جمع كيد* besides the meaning given in the text may also mean: He mustered

all his designs; he contrived all sorts of plans ; he did all that he could do.

2281. Important Words :

فَيُسْحِتْكُمْ (destroy you utterly) is derived from *سَحَتَ* which means, he earned unlawful money. *سَحَتَهُ* or *أَسْحَتَهُ* means, he destroyed him or it ; exterminated him or it ; he corrupted it. *سَحَتَ* means, he shaved his head so as to remove the hair utterly. *مَالَهُ سَحَتَ* means, his property may be taken and destroyed with impunity ; *دَمَهُ سَحَتَ* means, his blood may be shed with impunity (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 43.

Commentary :

The verse lays down an infallible criterion to test the truth of a claimant to Divine revelation, viz., that a forger of lies against God, though he may appear to progress and prosper for a while, ultimately perishes and comes to a miserable and ignoble end. This is a truth writ large on the pages of all religious history.

2282. Commentary :

This verse shows that the warning which Moses held out to the magicians in the words, *forge not a lie against Allah*, had had its effect

64. They said, 'Certainly "these two are magicians who desire to drive you out from your land by their magic and to destroy your best traditions."²²⁸³

قَالُوا إِنْ هَٰذَيْنِ لَسَاحِرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكَ
مِنْ أَرْضِكَ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكَ الْمُنْثَلِ ۖ

65. 'Concert, therefore, your plan; and then come forward arrayed in a body. And, surely, he who gains ascendancy this day shall prosper'.²²⁸⁴

فَاجْبِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ اسْتَوُوا صَفًّا وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ
الْيَوْمَ مَنْ اسْتَعْلَا ۖ

^a 7 : 110-111 ; 26 : 35-36.

on them with the result that some of them seemed to have wavered and vacillated. The words, *they argued their affair among themselves*, indicate that disagreement arose between them whether or not they should oppose Moses. Therefore in order to come to a final decision whether they should enter the lists against him or should withdraw, they held a secret consultation.

2283. Important Words :

طريق (your traditions) is derived from طرق. They say طرق الطريق *i.e.* he travelled or beat the road. طرق الباب means, he knocked at the door. طريقة means, a way, course, rule, habit, custom or tradition, manner or mode; path, road. طريقة القوم means, the best, the most excellent, the eminent or noble person among the community (Lane & Aqrab).

المثل (best) is the feminine of أمثل which is derived from مثل. They say مثل فلان فلاناً *i.e.* he became like such a one. أمثل (*amthalo*) or مثلى means, coming nearest to the model, *i.e.* the best. امثال القوم means, the best and the noblest persons in the community. They say المريض اليوم أمثل *i.e.* the patient today is in the best of health (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 13 : 7.

Commentary :

The reference in the words, "they said," is to the members of Pharaoh's party. It is they who spoke these words to incite the reluctant magicians to take the field against Moses. They brought two charges against Moses and Aaron. First, that Moses and Aaron sought to turn them out of their country by deceitful means; secondly that they intended to destroy their religion and the sacred traditions which they (people of Pharaoh) had inherited from their forefathers.

2284. Important Words :

كيد (plan) means, a plan, a wile, an artifice, artful contrivance; device; a plot; a stratagem, art; cunning, ingenuity or skill (Lane).

Commentary :

The magicians were told that they could use any device, artifice or wile to defeat Moses. This implied a confession that with Pharaoh and his people the end justified the means.

In the verse an appeal has also been made to the magicians' self-interest. They are told that if they were successful against Moses, it would be all to their good.

66. "They said, 'O Moses, either do thou cast *first*, or we shall be the first to cast.'²²⁸⁵

قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَى وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوَّلَ

مَنْ أَلْقَى ﴿٧٦﴾

67. "He said, 'Nay, cast ye.' Then lo ! their cords and their staves 'appeared to him, by their magic as though they ran *about*.'²²⁸⁶

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا فَإِذَا جِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ

إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ إِنَّهَا تَسْعُ ﴿٧٧﴾

68. And Moses conceived a fear in his mind.²²⁸⁷

فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَى ﴿٧٨﴾

° 77 : 116. ° 7 : 117 ; 26 : 44. ° 7 : 117.

2285. Commentary :

The words of the verse show that the magicians had behaved respectfully towards Moses and it is this respectful attitude of theirs which, perhaps, was mainly instrumental in enabling them to see the truth and accept it.

2286. Important Words :

عَصَاهُمْ (their staves). عَصَى is the plural of عَصَا which means : (1) a piece of wood on which one reclines, a stick, a stave; a party; the tongue (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words "Nay, cast ye", show that the Prophets of God never take the offensive. They wait till they are attacked and then they defend themselves.

The expression يَخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ (appeared to him) clearly indicates that the cords and staves of the magicians only *appeared* to Moses as though they ran about. Actually they did nothing of the kind. The forces of evil at first appear to carry the day for a short while but they soon come to grief and suffer defeat and destruction.

2287. Important Words :

أَوْجَسَ (conceived) is derived from وجس which means, he was frightened at some sound or other thing that fell into his mind or ear. وجس الشيء means, the thing was unperceived or hardly perceived by the eye or ear ; was hidden or concealed. أَوْجَسَ means, he conceived a thing in his mind. The Quranic expression أَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً means, and he conceived in his mind a fear or he perceived or felt and conceived in his mind a fear (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

When Moses saw the trick of the magicians he feared lest the people might be deceived thereby and be led astray. He was not afraid of the cords and staves of the magicians. The Prophets of God stand on a rock of certainty. Their belief and their trust in God is invincible. Nothing can shake their belief nor are they afraid of anything. Moses only feared that the people might not be led astray by the antics of the magicians.

69. We said, 'Fear not, for thou wilt have the upper hand.'²²⁸⁸

70. 'And cast that which is in thy right hand; "it will swallow that which they have wrought, for that which they have wrought is only a magician's trick. And a magician shall not thrive, come where he may.'²²⁸⁹

71. Then ^bthe magicians were made to fall down prostrate. They said, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."²²⁹⁰

72. *Pharaoh* said, ^a"Do you believe in him before I give you leave. He must be your chief who has taught you magic. ^cI will therefore surely cut off your hands and your feet on account of *your* disobedience, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees; and you shall know which of us can impose severer and more abiding punishment."²²⁹¹

قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى ٥٩

وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا

كَيْدٌ سِحْرٌ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى ٦٠

فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ

وَمُوسَى ٦١

قَالَ أَمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْنَى لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمْ

الَّذِي لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ السَّحَرَةُ فَلَا قِطْعَنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَ

أَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَلَا وَصْلَ بَنَاتِكُمْ فِي جُدُوعِ

النَّخْلِ وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ آيُنَا أَسَدُ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى ٦٢

^a 7 : 118 ; 26 : 46. ^b 7 : 121 ; 26 : 47. ^c 7 : 122-123 ; 26 : 48-49.

^d 7 : 124 ; 26 : 50. ^e 7 : 125 ; 26 : 50.

2288. Commentary :

In this verse God comforts Moses that the magicians would not succeed in leading people astray and that he will have the upper hand.

2289. Important Words :

تَلْقَفَ (swallow) is derived from لَقَفَ (*laqifa*). They say لَقَفَ الشَّيْءُ : he hastily took the thing. لَقَفَ الطَّعَامَ (*laqqafa*) means, he swallowed up the food (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse makes it clear that it was the rod of Moses and not anything else which "swallowed" that which the magicians had wrought, and which undid their magic. The rod of Moses wielded with the spiritual force of a great Pro-

phet and thrown at the command of Almighty God exposed the deception that the magicians had wrought on the spectators by their magic. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān the staves and cords of the magicians have been described as their lies (7 : 118).

2290. Commentary :

The magicians admitted their defeat and became fully convinced of the rightness and righteousness of Moses's cause.

2291. Important Words :

من (on account of) among other things means, because of, on account of, by reason of; as in مَا خَطِيئَتُهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا i.e. because of their sins they were drowned (71 : 26). It also means on, by, etc. (Aqrab).

73. They said, 'We shall not prefer thee to the manifest Signs that have come to us, nor *shall we prefer thee* to Him Who has created us. "So decree what thou wilt decree; thou canst only decree concerning this present life."²²⁹²

74. 'Surely, ^bwe have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and *forgive us* the magic which thou didst force us *to use*. And Allah is the Best and the Most Abiding.'

75. Verily, he who comes to his Lord a sinner—for him is Hell; he shall neither die therein nor live.²²⁹³

قَالُوا لَنْ تُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩٢﴾

إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطِئَنَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿٢٩٣﴾

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ ﴿٢٩٤﴾

^a 26 : 51. ^b 7 : 127 ; 26 : 52.

خلاف (disobedience) and مخالفة are infinitive nouns from خالف. They say خالفه *i.e.* he disagreed with him, he disobeyed or defied him. خالف بين الشيئين means, he put the things on contrary sides or in contrary directions. خلاف means, disobedience, defiance; the contrary or opposite of a thing; contrary or alternate sides (Aqrab & Lane). من خلاف would therefore mean, on account of disobedience or on alternate sides. من here is used in the sense of عن, which also signifies cause or reason (تعليل). The Quranic expression إلا عن موعدة وعدها إياه means, on account of a promise he had made (9 : 144).

Commentary :

The crucifixion was in itself a terrible form of death yet the punishment of cutting off the hands and the feet was added to make it all the more dreadful. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān the expression آمنتم به has been used in this connection. The difference between the two expressions is that whereas آمنتم به simply means, you have believed in him, the expres-

sion آمنتم له means, you have believed in him and have accepted his lead and have followed him.

2292. Commentary :

Mark the wonderful change that true faith works in man. The greedy and materialistic magicians who only a short while ago were asking for reward from Pharaoh, in the form of money, position or honour (7 : 114), became quite indifferent even to the most horrible form of death with which he threatened them when they found and accepted the truth.

2293. Commentary :

Death delivers man from pain. So the sinners will not die in Hell and will continue to suffer its torment. Neither will they live therein, because real life consists in the enjoyment of Divine love and they will be deprived of it. Or the verse may mean that the sinners will be completely deprived of all comfort and happiness and this condition is described here as worse than death.

76. But he who comes to Him as a believer having done good deeds, ^afor such are the highest ranks.—

77. ^bGardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will abide therein *for ever*. And that is the recompense of those who keep themselves pure.

4 78. And ^cWe sent revelation to Moses, *saying*, 'Take away My servants by night, and ^dstrike for them a dry path through the sea. Thou wilt not be afraid of being overtaken, nor wilt thou have *any other* fear.'^{2293A}

وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ

لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَىٰ ۖ

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ

فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ۚ

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنِ اسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاضْرِبْ

لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَا تَخَفُ دَرَكًا وَلَا

تَخْشَى ۚ

^a 4 : 96-97; 8 : 4-5. ^b 9 : 73 ; 18 : 32 ; 19 : 62 ; 61 : 13. ^c 26 : 53. ^d 26 : 64.

2293A. Important Words :

لا تخشى (nor wilt thou have fear) is formed from خشى which means, he feared or dreaded or feared with reverence, veneration, respect, or awe. We have in the Qur'ān وهم من خشيته مشفقون i.e. they fear their Lord, holding Him in reverence (21 : 29). خشى منه means, he feared or dreaded what might happen to him from him or it. خشية is the dread, fear or awe resulting from the knowledge which one possesses about a thing or person. The Quranic expression انما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء (35 : 29) means, only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt). The reference to the fear mentioned in the words لا تخشى is to the dangers of the sea and other hardships that lay ahead of the Israelites.

Commentary :

The incident mentioned in this verse relates

to the time when, under God's command, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan. The Israelites left secretly by night, and when Pharaoh learnt of their flight, he pursued them with his hosts and was drowned in the Red Sea.

In order to appreciate fully the nature and significance of this incident which indeed constituted a great Divine Sign, it is necessary to read the verse under comment along with other relevant verses such as vv. 2 : 51, 26 : 62-64 & 44 : 25. The Qur'ān says :

And remember the time when We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people while you looked on (2 : 51).

And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, 'We are surely overtaken.'...Then We revealed to Moses, saying, 'Strike the sea with thy rod.' Whereupon it parted and every part was like a huge sand-hill (26 : 62-64). When the Israelites were passing they had the sea on one side and the small lakes

on the other, which conformably to the natural laws of perspective appeared raised above the level of the land.

And leave the sea at a time when it is motionless. Surely, they are a host which is doomed to be drowned (44 : 25), i.e. pass through the sea quickly at a time when the tide has receded.

The Bible also refers to this incident in the following verses :

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea. . . And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Stretch out thine hand over the sea'. . . And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its strength. . . . And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them (Exod. 14 : 21-28).

The following facts emerge from the above account of this incident as given in the Qur'ān and the Bible;

(a) that Moses was commanded by God to take away the Israelites out of Egypt by night;

(b) that Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his mighty hosts;

(c) that when the Israelites reached the arm of the Red Sea which lay across their route, they were greatly dismayed because Pharaoh was

close behind with his hosts;

(d) that when on seeing Pharaoh's hosts the Israelites exclaimed in fright that they were overtaken, God commanded Moses to strike the water of the sea with his rod;

(e) that when Moses struck the sea with his rod as the Qur'ān says or stretched out his hand over the sea as the Bible says, it was the time of the ebb-tide and the sea was receding, leaving a dry bed;

(f) that Moses was commanded by God to cross quickly the dry bed to the opposite bank, which he did;

(g) that when the hosts of Pharaoh reached the sea, it was the time of high tide and that in their zeal to overtake the Israelites they took no notice of it and at once jumped into the sea behind them; and

(h) that, as it appears, being heavily equipped with big chariots and other heavy armaments the progress of the army of Pharaoh was greatly retarded so that while they were yet in the midst of the sea, the high tide returned and they were all drowned.

Historians differ as to the exact place from where Moses crossed the Red Sea from Egypt into Canaan. Some are of the view that on his way from the territory of Goshen, which is also called the valley of Al-Tamthilat or Wādī Tumulāt and where the capital of the Pharaohs was situated (Enc. Bib. vol. 4, col. 4012, under "Rameses"), Moses passed by the Gulf of Timsāḥ (Enc. Bib., cols. 1438 & 1439). Others think that he went much further to the north and going round Zoan crossed over to Canaan near the Mediterranean Sea (Enc. Bib., col. 1438). But what is

most probable is the fact that from Tal Abi Sulaimān which was the capital of the Pharaohs in Moses's time, the Israelites at first went to north-east to the Gulf of Timsāḥ but finding that a net of gulfs barred their way, they turned south and crossed the Red Sea near the town of Suez where it is hardly more than 2/3 mile wide, and started for Qadas (Enc. Bib., col. 1437).

The following passage from Peake's "Commentary on the Bible" (p. 64) may also be read with interest:

The Israelites fled with him (Moses) across the Goshen marshes into the Sinaitic peninsula. The crossing of the "Red Sea" (*yam sūph*, "sea" or "lake of reeds") was probably the crossing of the southern end of a lake a few miles N.W. of what is now called the Red Sea. A wind laid bare a wide stretch of shore, and when an Egyptian force pursued the fugitives, their chariot wheels stuck fast in the wet soil, and the water returned upon them when the wind shifted. Writers differ as to the route taken by the Israelites. Some think that they moved southward to the mountainous range of (the modern) Sinai, and then along the eastern arm of the Red Sea, now known as the Gulf of 'Akaba, to its northernmost point at Ezion-Geber. Others think that the evidence points to the route still taken by Mecca pilgrims, nearly due E. to Ezion Geber, and that thence they moved N.W. to the region of Kadesh (Barnea), to Mt. Sinai or southward along the E. side of the Gulf of 'Akaba to Mt. Horeb. The traditions differ and certainty is impossible.

There are people who against all canons of history take particular delight in propounding most extraordinary theories that the Israelites never lived in Egypt. Some such theories are:

(a) No reference to the Israelites is to be found in the old Egyptian historical records.

(b) In the fifth year of the reign of Pharaoh Menepthah (or Merenptah) when Moses is said to have taken the Israelites out of Egypt, some

Israelite tribes were actually living in Canaan, therefore the theory of Moses having taken the Israelites out of Egypt to Canaan during his reign and their having settled in that country some fifty years later is all wrong.

(c) Though some trace is found of some tribes having crossed over from Asia into Egypt but there is no proof that these were the Israelite tribes.

The propounders of these strange theories seem to ignore the patent fact that the Israelites were foreigners in Egypt and were a subject race and lived the miserable life of slaves under their cruel rulers. How could such people be considered worthy of any notice being taken of them by historians? Apart from this the fact may also be taken into consideration that when it is not quite possible for historians even in this 20th century to prepare a well-connected and harmonious narrative about a people from the remnants of its ruined civilization, it was much more difficult for historians in the past to reconstruct a consistent record from the fragmentary accounts of a people who lived in the hoary past and who were treated like beasts of burden by their rulers. This is why no reference to the Israelites is to be found in the old historical records of Egypt.

Secondly, the doubtful theory that certain Israelite tribes were found to be living in Canaan in the 5th year of the reign of Pharaoh Menepthah cannot disprove the fact that other Israelite tribes had remained behind in Egypt. Is it not possible that some of these tribes might have left Egypt for Canaan sometime before all of them were taken out of it by Moses. It is very strange that on the one hand these very writers say that Moses is an Egyptian name and that some of the companions of Moses also had Egyptian names, and on the other that the

Israelites never went to Egypt. Moreover, the Bible gives a detailed and well-connected story of the Israelites having lived in Egypt. There was no compelling reason for the writers of the Bible to have done so, especially when the Israelites had lived there only as slaves and worse than beasts of burden. No people would feel any urge or pride in forging and falsely inventing such a miserable record of shame and sorrow of themselves. Last but not least, the Biblical details with regard to the customs, culture and mode of life of the Pharaohs of that time is another proof of the fact that the Israelites had lived under them. The Bible had no interest in the Pharaoh dynasty of Egypt apart from their being rulers of the Israelites. Besides, as stated by old Greek historians, the Egyptians themselves admitted that the Israelites had lived in Egypt for a long time and later on had left this country. The present Egypt, however, should not be confused with a territory which in ancient times was also known as Egypt but which formed a part of northern Syria or northern Arabia.

The date of the Exodus has also been much contested and there seems to be considerable difficulty in determining its exact date from the Biblical records alone. Neither the name of the reigning Pharaoh nor the place where he held his court is mentioned; the account given is not contemporary, but has been condensed and annotated by later editors, and fused by them into a general narrative; and the Biblical chronology of the period, though containing trustworthy material, is known to be largely artificial. Apart from the Biblical records any historical information on the subject is meagre. Various theories, however, are held about the Exodus. Some of these are as follows :

1. The view that the Israelites left Egypt with the Hyksos (1580 B.C.) at the beginning of the XVIIIth Dynasty, or shortly afterwards, and

lived a nomadic life of about 200 years in the desert previous to entering Canaan. But evidently this view seems to do violence to genuine Hebrew tradition.

2. The theory which dates the Exodus in the XVIIIth Dynasty, but about 1445 B.C. just after the long despotic reign of Thutmose III and during that of his son Amenhotep II (1447-1420 B.C.). This theory too lacks the support of trustworthy historical material and Hebrew tradition.

3. The hypothesis which connects the Exodus with the religious revolution attempted by Amenhotep IV, otherwise known as Akhenaten (1383-1366 B.C.) This view would place the Exodus about 1350 or 1345 B.C. This seems to be more plausible than the first two views.

4. But the theory, largely prevalent which receives much support from historical data, archaeological research and Hebrew tradition is that the Exodus occurred in the Nineteenth Dynasty (1282-1202 B.C.), in the reign of Merenptah II or Menepthah II (1234-1214) and still seems the most probable. It appears to have taken place about 1230 B.C. According to this view the Pharaoh of the Oppression would be Rameses II and his successor Merenptah II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus (Peake's Commentary on the Bible, pp. 119, 955 & 956).

Incidentally, it may be stated here that the striking of the water of the sea with his rod by Moses had no cause and effect connection with the actual parting of the sea. It was merely a sign or a Divine intimation that it was the time of the ebb tide and that the Israelites should hasten to cross. God had so arranged that when Moses reached the sea the tide was about to go back, so that as soon as he struck the sea with his rod in obedience to Divine command, it began to recede and a dry path was made for the Israelites. The striking of the

79. "Then Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts, and *the waters of the sea* completely overwhelmed them.²²⁹⁴

80. And Pharaoh led his people astray and did not guide them aright.

81. 'O Children of Israel, ^bWe delivered you from your enemy, and ^cWe made a covenant with you on the right side of the Mount, and We sent down on you manna and "salwā."²²⁹⁵

فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِنَ الْيَمِّ
مَا غَشِيَهُمْ ۙ

وَاضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَىٰ ۙ

يَبْنَئِ إِسْرَءِيلَ قَدْ أَنْجَيْنَاكَ مِنْ عَدُوِّكَ وَمَا
وَعَدْنَاكَ جَانِبَ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
الْمَنَّاءَ ۙ

^a 10 : 91 ; 26 : 61. ^b 2 : 51; 14 : 7 ; 44 : 31-32. ^c 19 : 53; 20 : 13 ; 28 : 31 ; 79 : 17.

water with his rod by Moses and the recession of the sea coincided. This constituted a miracle because God alone knew when the sea would recede and He had commanded Moses to strike its waters at the time of its recession.

2294. Important Words :

تبع (pursued them) is derived from تبع. They say تبعه i.e. he followed him. أتبعه means, he followed him and overtook him. أتبعه بهم means, he made him to be followed by them i.e. he made them to follow him. فاتبعهم فرعون بجنوده means, Pharaoh made his troops to follow them (Lane & Aqrab). See also 10 : 91.

يم (sea) is substantive-noun from يَم (yamma). The Arabs say يَم الرجل i.e. the man was thrown into the sea. يَم الساحل means, the water of the river overflowed its banks. يَم means, the sea; or the sea of unknown or unreachable depth; a great body of water. See also 7 : 137.

2295. Important Words :

المن (manna). They say من عليه i.e. he bestowed a favour on him. من which is infinitive noun signifies bestowing favour upon a man or doing good to him. المن means, (1)

anything which comes to a man without much effort on his part; (2) a favour; (3) honey-dew (Aqrab). Dr. Jesenius in his dictionary has also referred to المن as having been from من (manna) and means, a favour or bounty. See also 2 : 58.

سلوى is derived from سلا. They say سلا عن الشيء i.e. he was satiated with the thing. سلوى is (1) a whitish bird resembling a quail; (2) anything which gives a man satisfaction or contentment; (3) honey (Aqrab). See also 2 : 58.

Commentary :

The Israelites had lived long in bondage under the heartless tyranny of the Pharaohs and consequently had come to lose all those manly qualities that go to make a people hardy, brave and courageous. According to the Divine scheme of things they were destined to conquer and rule over Canaan. Therefore after Moses had taken them out of Egypt they were made to live in the arid and barren region of Sinai in order that they might become used to a free and hard life and thus acquire and develop those qualities which were so essential for a great future that lay in store for them. But having lived in bond-

82. "Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and transgress not therein, lest My wrath descend upon you; and he on whom My wrath descends, shall perish."²²⁹⁶

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي وَمَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوِيَ ۖ

هوے ۖ

" 2 : 58; 7 : 161.

age for a long time they had lost all initiative and had become used to a life of lethargy and lassitude. So when they saw that they would have to live in the wilderness where no amenities of life were to be found and even food was lacking, they were utterly dismayed and fretted and fumed and quarrelled with Moses saying: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exod. 16 : 3). God heard the murmurings of the Israelites and commanded Moses to tell those ungrateful people: "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God" (Exod. 16 : 12). And how this Divine promise was fulfilled has been described in the Bible as follows:

And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. (Exod. 16 : 13-15).

This was the food which in answer to the murmurings of the Israelites God, out of His

infinite grace and mercy, bestowed upon them in the wilderness of Sinai and which they were given without much effort or labour on their part, and which was found when stark hunger seemed to stare them in the face, and the fact of its having been found in that place and condition did, indeed, constitute a great miracle. It is to this incident that reference has been made in the verse under comment.

The manna has also been referred to in a saying of the Holy Prophet, viz. الكمأة من العن i.e. the truffle is one of the things included in the manna (Bukhārī). In Lane's Lexicon we have the following explanation for manna under the word ترنجبین (*turanjabīn*): A kind of manna: the manna of the thorny plants called by the Arabs the *haj*, and hence by European botanists *Alhagi*; according to Dr. Royle it is a sweetish juice which exudes from the *Alhagi maurorum*, crystallizes into small granular masses, and is usually distinguished by the name of Persian manna; a kind of dew that falls mostly in Khurasan and Ma-wara al-nahr and in our country, mostly upon the *haj*; the best thereof is that which is fresh or moist and white (Ibn Sīnā), the من or manna mentioned in the Qur'ān (p. 306).

2296. Important Words :

فيحل (lest it descend) is formed from حل. They say حل بالقوم i.e. he alighted or descended and stopped at or in the abode of the people. حل الدين means, the time of the payment of the

83. 'But^a surely I am forgiving to those who repent and believe and do good deeds, and then stick to guidance.'²²⁹⁷

وَأَنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ

اهْتَدَى ۝۸۳

84. 'And what has made thee hasten away from thy people, O Moses?'

وَمَا أَجْعَلُكَ عَنْ قَوْمِكَ يَمُوسَى ۝۸۴

85. He said, 'They are *closely following* in my footsteps and I have hastened to Thee, my Lord, that thou mightest be pleased.'²²⁹⁸

قَالَ هُمْ أُولَاءِ عَلَى أَثَرِي وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ

لِتَرْضَى ۝۸۵

^a 3 : 136; 39 : 54.

debt has ended *i.e.* its payment has become due. *يحل عليكم غضبي* means, lest My wrath befall you; lest it become due to you *i.e.* lest it overtake you at once (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 169.

هوى (shall perish). *هوى الشئ* means, the thing fell from a high to a low place; it rose and descended. According to some *الهوى* (*alhawiyu*) is used for going up and *الهوى* (*alhuwiyyu*) for going down. *هوت الام* means, the mother died; or may his mother die (Aqrab).

Commentary :

At three places in the Qur'ān the sending down of manna and *salwā* has been mentioned; *viz.* in the present verse and in vv. 2 : 58 and 7 : 161 and at all these three places the fact has been followed by the injunction, 'Eat of the good things that We have provided for you.' This shows that whereas the food which was provided to the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai was wholesome, palatable and good in taste; it consisted not of one but of several things, *من* (truffle) and *سلوى* (quails) forming the major part of them.

The injunction in the words 'And transgress not therein' contained a warning to the Israelites

that as they had been provided with food in abundance in the wilderness without much labour on their part and purely as an act of God's grace, they should not misuse this Divine gift, the powerful and the influential among them hoarding it for themselves and depriving the poor and the weak of their due share.

2297. Important Words :

اهتدى (stick to guidance) is derived from *هدى* They say *هداه* *i.e.*, he guided him. *الهدى* which is the infinitive form, is generally used in three different senses: to show the right path; to lead to the right path; and to make one follow the right path. *اهتدى* means, he sought guidance; he followed guidance and he stuck to guidance (Aqrab, Baqā & Mufradāt).

2298. Important Words :

أثرت الحديث (footsteps). *أثرت* means, I recited or narrated the story or tradition. *آثره* means, he honoured him. *آثر* means, a remain or relic of a thing; a trace; sign or mark; a footstep, vestige or track; a footprint, impression or mark made by the foot of a man upon the ground. They say *عليه اثر كذا* *i.e.* he or it bears the mark, stamp, character or trace of such a thing (Lane & Aqrab).

86. *God* said, "We have tried thy people in thy absence, and the Sāmīrī has led them astray."²²⁹⁹

87. So ^bMoses returned to his people indignant and sorrowful. He said, 'O my people, did not your Lord promise you a gracious promise? Did, then, the appointed time appear too long to you, or did you desire that wrath should descend upon you from your Lord, that you broke *your* promise to me?'²³⁰⁰

88. They said, 'We have not broken *our* promise to thee of our own accord; but we were laden with loads of people's ornaments and we threw them away, and likewise did the Sāmīrī cast.'²³⁰¹

قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ
السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٢٩﴾

فَرَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ
يَقَوْمُ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا أَفَبَالٍ
عَلَيْكُمْ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ يَجِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاخْلَفْتُمْ مَوْعِدِي ﴿٣٠﴾

قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلِكِنَا وَلَكِنَّا حَمَلْنَا
أَوْزَارًا مِنْ زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذَلِكَ أَلْقَى
السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٣١﴾

٢٩ : 149. ٣٠ : 151.

2299. Important Words :

السامري (Sāmīrī) is derived from سمر. They say سمره *i.e.* he nailed it, *i.e.* he made it fast, firm or strong with a nail or nails, a nail being called سمار. Hence سامر is one who makes things fast with nails, *i.e.* one belonging to the profession of black-smiths, carpenters, etc. Thus سامرة means, a people who carry on the profession of blacksmiths, carpenters etc. *i.e.* artisans. Sāmīrī, the mischief-maker, seems to belong to this class. So سامري may be a descriptive or attributive name. Or it may be a relative noun from سامرة (the Samaritans), a people said to be one of the tribes of the Children of Israel; or a sect of the Jews, differing from them in many of their institutions. Properly speaking they were inhabitants of Samaria. The name is now restricted to a small tribe of

people living in Nablus and calling themselves "Bene Yisrael". Their history as a distinct community began with the taking of Samaria by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (Lane & Jew. Enc.).

2300. Commentary :

موعدى (my promise) means, the promise which you made to me, or the promise which God made to you through me.

2301. Important Words :

موعدك (thy promise) means, the promise which we made to thee.

Commentary :

Whereas the Qur'ān in this verse says that the Egyptians gave the Israelites jewels of gold and silver of their own accord, the Bible accuses them of having despoiled the Egyptians of their

89. Then he produced for them "a calf—a mere body producing a lowing sound. And they said, 'This is your god, and the god of Moses.' So he gave up *the religion of Moses*.²³⁰²

90. Could they not see that it returned to them no answer, and had no power to do them either harm or good?²³⁰³

فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عَجْلاً جَسَداً لَهُ خُوارٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ مُوسَى هَ فَنَسِيَ^{٨٩}

أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا هَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا^{٩٠}

^a 2 : 52, 93; 4 : 154; 7 : 149.

ornaments (Exod. 12 : 36). But, as generally is the case, in this respect also the Bible has contradicted itself. At another place (Exod. 12 : 35) it says that the Egyptians themselves gave the ornaments to the Israelites and insisted that they should leave Egypt forthwith. Reason and common sense support the Quranic and the latter statement of the Bible.

2302. Important Words :

خوار (lowing sound) is infinitive-noun from خوار. They say خوار البقر *i.e.* the cow made a lowing sound, it bellowed. خور (*khawira*) means, it became weak and enfeebled; it broke. خوار signifies the loud crying (*i.e.* the lowing or bellowing) of a cow and of a calf; and the crying (*i.e.* bleating) of sheep, or that of goats and gazelles, and of any beast and the whizzing of arrow. They say له صوت كخوار الثور *i.e.* he has a voice like the bellowing of the bull (Aqrab, Lane & Mufradāt).

فَنَسِيَ (so he gave up) means, he forgot or he abandoned or gave up or ceased acting (Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 5 : 14 & 9 : 67.

Commentary :

The Israelites had lived in Egypt under bondage for a long time and during their bondage they had acquired many of the customs, ways of life and religious rites of their rulers, the Egyptians, who worshipped the cow (Enc. Rel. & Ethics, vol. 1, p. 507). In this way they had also developed a great liking for the cow, and taking advantage of Moses's absence Sāmiri led them into cow-worship.

2303. Commentary :

The calf is denounced and condemned as a deity because it does not speak to its votaries. Of what use is that god who does not answer the prayer of his worshippers? (21 : 66-67). He is as dead as a log of wood. The difference between a living and a lifeless god is that the One speaks to His votaries and hears their supplications while the other does not. The God of Islam has not ceased to speak to His true worshippers. He still speaks to them as He spoke to Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon them all) and will continue to do so till the end of time.

- 5 91. And Aaron had said to them before this, 'O my people, you have only been tried by means of it (the calf). And surely, the Gracious God is your Lord, so follow me and obey my command.'²³⁰⁴

92. They replied, 'We shall not cease to worship it until Moses return to us.'²³⁰⁵

93. Moses said, 'O Aaron, what hindered thee, when thou didst see them gone astray,

94. 'From following me? Hast thou then disobeyed my command?'²³⁰⁶

2304. Commentary :

The Qur'ān here contradicts the Bible and clears Aaron of the charge of having made a molten calf for the Israelites to worship (Exod. 32 : 4). It says that not only did Aaron not fashion the calf for them but on the other hand prohibited them from worshipping the one which the Sāmīrī had made for them. It offends against reason and common sense even to think that a Prophet of God who had heard His voice and had had communion with Him should have stooped so low as to worship a calf. The charge is patently so foolish that it has been dismissed as unfounded by Christian writers themselves (Enc. Brit. under "the Golden Calf" and under "Moses.")

As usual, in this case also the Bible has contradicted itself. Far from deserving condemnation on account of being involved in cow-worship, Aaron at God's command was to be dressed with holy garments, be anointed and sanctified by Moses (Exod 40 : 13).

The words "you have been tried by means of it" show that in the offer of calf-worship by

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يَقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا
فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا

أَمْرِي ①

قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَافِيَةً حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا

مُوسَى ②

قَالَ يَهُرُونَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا ③

أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي ④

the Sāmīrī lay the greatest trial of the Israelites because this worship was calculated to destroy their national unity. The trials and tribulations which the Israelites had suffered at the hands of Pharaoh were nothing compared with the spiritual trial to which they had become exposed through the wicked designs of the Sāmīrī. While the former had helped to cement their national unity, the latter had almost destroyed it. It had caused dissensions among the Israelites; and internecine discord and dissensions are more destructive of national unity than external dangers.

2305. Commentary :

The verse shows that while Moses was held in awe by the Israelites they had no great respect for Aaron.

2306 Commentary :

Moses here severely calls Aaron to account for not having properly looked after the spiritual welfare of the Israelites in his absence. The verse thus clearly shows Aaron to be a subordinate Prophet to Moses.

95. He answered, "O Son of my mother, seize *me* not by my beard, nor by *the hair of* my head. I feared lest thou shouldst say, 'Thou hast caused a division among the Children of Israel, and didst not wait for my word.'"²³⁰⁷

قَالَ يَبْنُوْمٌ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي ۚ إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي ۝٩٥

96. Moses said, 'And what hast thou to say, O Sāmīrī?'²³⁰⁸

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَامِرِيُّ ۝٩٦

97. He said, 'I perceived what they perceived not. I *only* partly received the impress of the Messenger (Moses), but that *too* I cast away. Thus it is that my mind commended to me'.²³⁰⁹

قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي ۝٩٧

^a 7 : 151.

2307. Important Words :

لم ترقب (didst not wait for) is formed from رقب. رقبه means, (a) he looked, watched or waited for him or it; (b) he guarded, kept, preserved or took care of it; (c) he was mindful or regardful of it; (d) he feared him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Taking the word رقب in its different senses the expression لم ترقب قولي would mean, thou didst not wait for my word; thou didst not preserve and guard my word (the instructions which I left for your guidance); thou wast not regardful of my word *i.e.* thou didst not pay any regard to my directions which I left for your guidance.

2308. Important Words :

ما خطبك (what hast thou to say). خطب (khatbun) among other things may also mean, object, purpose, plea, defence etc. See also 12 : 52.

2309. Important Words :

بصرت (I perceived) is from بصر (baṣora). They say بصره او به *i.e.* he perceived it; he knew it; he saw it. أبصره means, he saw it or him, by the sight of the eye; or he looked at him or toward him or it trying whether he could see him or not. أبصر also means, he relinquished infidelity and adopted the true belief. أبصر الطريق means, the way became manifest (Lane & Aqrab). See also 6 : 104 & 7 : 204.

Commentary :

The words *I perceived that which they did not perceive* mean, "My mental perception was clearer than that of the Israelites". The Sāmīrī means to say that he had followed Moses and had accepted his teachings intelligently and not blindly like them and that his object in doing so was that he should become the leader of his people. So when the proper occasion arrived and Moses went to the Mount, he threw away the cloak of expediency and discarded what little of his teachings he had accepted and that was what his mind suggested to him.

98. *Moses* said, "Go away. It shall be thine to say throughout thy life, 'Touch me not'; and there is a promise of *punishment* for thee which shall not fail to be fulfilled about thee. Now look at thy god of which thou hast become a devoted worshipper. We will certainly burn it and then We will scatter it away into the sea."²³¹⁰

99. Your God is only Allah, beside Whom there is no god. He embraces all things in *His* knowledge.

100. Thus do We relate to thee the tidings of what has happened before. And We have given thee from Us a Reminder.²³¹¹

قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا
مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَنْ تُخْلَفَهُ وَانْظُرْ
إِلَى إِلَهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ
لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا ۝

إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۝

كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ
وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا ۝

2310. Important Words :

نَسَفَ (We will scatter it) is derived from نَسَفَ. They say نَسَفَ الْبِنَاءَ i.e. he destroyed or uprooted the building from its foundation. نَسَفَ الْجِبَالَ means, He broke the mountains into pieces. نَسَفَ الرِّيحُ الشَّيْءَ means, the wind uprooted or eradicated the thing and scattered it away (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words "touch me not" may signify one of the following: (a) that Sāmīrī was punished with a rigorous social boycott for having misled the Israelites into calf-worship; (b) that he was afflicted with some contagious skin disease so that people avoided contact with him; or (c) that he suffered from hypochondriasis and consequently shunned the company of men.

The mentioning together of the cow and the river is significant because generally the nations that worship the cow are found to worship rivers also.

2311. Commentary :

The verse embodies a prophecy that the Holy Prophet will have to face conditions and circumstances similar to those which Moses had confronted. No other Israelite Prophet had so many points of resemblance with the Holy Prophet as Moses had. Moses had Aaron, his brother, as his assistant in the discharge of his duties. The Holy Prophet had his cousin 'Alī whom he likened to Aaron when he left him behind on the occasion of the expedition to Tabūk. Aaron was accused of having made for the Israelites a calf for worship and 'Alī was accused of being an accomplice in the murder of 'Uthmān. The Holy Prophet also had a Sāmīrī in the person of the Jew, 'Abdullah bin Sabā, who outwardly became a Muslim and stirred up revolt against the third Caliph, 'Uthmān, which culminated in the latter's assassination and in an internecine split in Islam which unfortunately has since then shown no sign of abating or healing.

101. Whoso^a turns away from it will surely bear a *heavy* burden on the Day of Resurrection,^{2311A}

102. Abiding thereunder; and evil will the burden be to them on the Day of Resurrection,^{2311B}

103. The day when ^bthe trumpet will be blown. And on that day We shall gather the sinful together, blue-eyed.²³¹²

104. They will talk to one another in a low tone *saying*, 'You tarried only ten *days*'—²³¹³

مَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وِزْرًا ۝١٠١

خَالِدِينَ فِيهِ وَسَاءَ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حِمْلًا ۝١٠٢

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْجُرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
زُرْقًا ۝١٠٣

يَتَخَفَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا ۝١٠٤

^a 18 : 102; 43 : 37-39; 72 : 18 ^b 18 : 100; 27 : 88; 36 : 52; 78 : 19.

2311A. Commentary :

The words يوم القيامة (Day of Resurrection) have been used in the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth in three senses : (a) the day of the death of a person as in the saying of the Holy Prophet *viz.*, من مات فقد قامت قيامته *i.e.* he who dies, the day of his resurrection indeed has come (Bihār, vol. 3, p. 183); (b) the time of the decline, downfall and death of a nation; (c) the day when all mankind will be raised from their graves and made to stand before God's great Judgment Seat to render an account of their deeds. In the present verse the words "the Day of Resurrection" seem to have been used in the first sense.

2311B. Commentary :

In this verse the words يوم القيامة have been metaphorically used in the second sense *i.e.* in this very life a day of resurrection comes to a people or group of peoples.

2312. Important Words :

زُرْقًا (blue-eyed) is the plural of ازرق and is derived from زرق which means, (1) he was blue-eyed or grey-eyed or of a greenish hue in the

eye; (2) he was or became blind. زرقت او أزرت زرقته عينية نحوى means, his eye turned towards me so that the white thereof appeared *i.e.* he looked askance at me on account of hatred or fear. أزرق is an epithet applied to a man having what is termed زرقه (blue colour) of the eye; blue-eyed; grey-eyed; blind from what is commonly termed as a cataract in the eye (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The allusion in this verse primarily seems to be to the Western Christian nations who have blue eyes and are spiritually blind and possess an undying hatred for Islam.

2313. Commentary :

عشرا (ten days) here signifies ten centuries. The reference is to the ten centuries after the Hijra during which the European nations remained in a state of inactivity and dormancy. It was in the beginning of the 17th century, exactly one thousand years after the Holy Prophet began to preach his mission in the beginning of the 7th century A.D., that the nations of Europe came out of their hibernation and began to spread over the world and conquer it. See also 18 : 20.

105. We know best what they will say—when the one possessing the best way of life among them will say, ‘You have tarried only a day.’²³¹⁴

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ أَثْلَمَ طَرِيقَهُ
إِنْ لَيْسَتْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا ۝

6 106. And “they ask thee concerning the mountains. Say, ‘My Lord will break them into pieces and scatter them as dust.’²³¹⁵

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا ۝

107. ‘And He will leave them as a barren level plain,’²³¹⁶

فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ۝

^a 56 : 6; 70 : 10; 101 : 6

2314. Commentary :

يَوْمًا (a day) here signifies one thousand years referred to in 22 : 48 where it is said : *verily, a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years of what you reckon*. This يَوْمًا (a day) corresponds to عَشْرًا (ten days) of the preceding verse, i.e. ten centuries or a thousand years.

يَوْمًا also means time absolutely. In this sense of the word the disbelievers, when they are seized with Divine punishment, are depicted as saying that the time of their prosperity and progress was but a day i.e. very short. In fact the period of ease and comfort, however long, looks very short when misfortunes and miseries overtake a person. So this word may have been used here in the sense of “a short time.”

2315. Important Words :

الجبال (mountains) is the plural of جبل (a mountain). Figuratively, the word جبل means, (1) chief of a tribe or community ; (2) a learned man who towers above those around him (هو جبل) i.e., he is like a mountain and does not move from his place); (3) a niggard; (4) a great hardship or calamity (Lane & Aqrab). See also 13 : 32.

The reference in the word الجبال (mountains) here is to the powerful Christian nations of the West. The prophecy contained in this

verse is that these great powerful nations will be scattered as dust. The decline of the West has already begun. The last two World Wars have considerably weakened the hold of the West over the East and Eastern nations are gradually coming into their own. This decline of the West is too patent to be overlooked and Western political thinkers themselves realize and admit it. The reader is referred to Spengler’s “Decline of the West”, and Toynbee’s “A Study of History”. See also 18 : 8, 9.

2316. Important Words :

قَاعًا (barren and level) is derived from قَاع which means, he desisted, recoiled or drew back; he inclined to one side while walking. القاع means, an even place; plain or level land that produces nothing ; plain or soft land, low and free from mountain and herbage (Aqrab & Lane).

صفصفاً (level plain) is derived from صَف which means, he placed or stationed in a row. صَفْصَف means, a level or an even tract of land or ground. اَرْض صَفْصَف signifies, a smooth and level or even land or a waterless desert (Lane).

Commentary :

The reference in the verse seems to be to the complete destruction of the material power and resources of the Western nations. See also 18 : 8, 9.

108. 'Wherein thou wilt see no depression, or elevation.'²³¹⁷

109. On that day they will follow the Caller *whose teaching is* without crookedness; and all voices shall be hushed before the Gracious God and thou shalt not hear but a subdued sound of footsteps.²³¹⁸

110. On that day "intercession shall not avail *any person* save him in whose case the Gracious God grants permission and with whose word of faith He is pleased."²³¹⁹

لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا ۝

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ

الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ۝

يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ

الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا ۝

^a 21 : 29; 78 : 39.

2317. Important Words :

أَمْتًا (elevation) is infinitive noun from أَمَتَ (amata). أَمَتَهُ means, he measured it; he betook himself to it. أَمْتٌ (amtun) means, a measure of distance; doubt; curvity or crookedness or unevenness; ruggedness in one place and smoothness in another; one part being high or more prominent than another; an elevated place; a hillock, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The allusion seems to be to the rise of Socialism and Democracy in our own time when great and powerful empires were to be swept away and there was to be a general levelling up of the social and economic conditions of different sections of human society. This process has already begun.

2318. Important Words :

هَمْسًا (subdued sound) is derived from هَمَسَ (hamasa). They say هَمَسَ الصَّوْتُ i.e. he whispered in a subdued tone. هَمَسَ الطَّعَامُ means, he chewed the food while his mouth was shut. هَمَسَ إِلَى مَحْدِثِهِ means, he narrated to me his story in a low voice. هَمَسَ بِالْقَدَمِ means, he walked stealthily. الْهَمْسُ means, low or subdued voice;

or subdued sound of footsteps. أَخَذْتَهُ هَمْسًا means, I seized him with a terrible seizure (Aqrab).

Commentary :

الدَّاعِيَ (the Caller) may refer to the Holy Prophet or his representative or Khalifa. The verse also alludes to the decline and ultimate destruction of the material power of the West and to the rise and ascendancy of Islam through a great Muslim Caller i.e. the Promised Messiah.

2319. Commentary :

The words "in whose case the Gracious God grants permission" may apply to both the intercessor and the person for whom intercession is made.

The expression "and with whose word of faith He is pleased" refers to Muslims. Elsewhere the Qur'ān says about the true followers of Islam: "Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him" (58 : 23). The verse under comment means to say that at that time Islam will be in the ascendancy and all progress and prosperity will fall to the lot of its followers. Allah will be well pleased with them and they will be well pleased with Him.

111. "He knows *all* that is before them and *all* that is behind them, but they cannot compass it with *their* knowledge."²³²⁰

112. And *all* faces shall humble themselves before the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining God. And he shall indeed perish who bears *the burden of iniquity*.²³²¹

113. But he ^bwho does good works, being a believer, will fear neither injustice nor loss.²³²²

114. And thus have ^aWe sent it down—the Qur'ān in Arabic—and We have explained therein every kind of warning, that they may fear God or that it may arouse *Divine* remembrance in them.^{2322A}

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا
يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا ۝

وَعَنْتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ
ظُلْمًا ۝

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَفُ
ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا ۝

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ
الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا ۝

^a 2 : 256; 21 : 29. ^b 10 : 10; 16 : 98; 21 : 95. ^c 42 : 8; 43 : 4; 46 : 13.

2320. Commentary :

The allusion in the verse seems to be to the great material achievements of the Western people. The words "all that is behind them" refer to the great accomplishments that they will already have made in the past and the words "that is before them" refer to the great achievements they will aspire to make in the future.

2321. Commentary :

The theme of the preceding verses regarding destruction of the power of the great and powerful Western nations and their abasement continues in this verse. The verse may also signify that these great nations will humble themselves before God—they will humbly accept God's true religion—Islam.

2322. Important Words :

هَضْمًا (loss) is infinitive noun from هَضَمَ (haḍama). هَضَمَ الشَّيْءَ means, he broke the thing. هَضَمَ فَلَانًا means, he wronged him and was unjust to him. هَضَمَ means, wrong ; loss of one's right (Aqrab).

2322A. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that if the Western nations wish to escape the Divine punishment which they have incurred by their evil deeds, and which is in store for them; they can do so by accepting the Message of Islam and by following the Holy Prophet.

115. "Exalted then is Allah, the True King! And be not impatient for the Qur'ān ere its revelation is completed unto thee, but *only* say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.'²³²³

فَتَعَلَّى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي

عِلْمًا ۝

116. And verily, We had made a covenant with Adam beforehand, but he forgot, and We found in him no determination to disobey.²³²⁴

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلِ فَنَسَىٰ وَلَمْ يُجِدْ

لَهُ عَزْمًا ۝

٢. 7 117. And "when We said to the angels, 'Submit to Adam', and they all submitted. But Iblīs *did not*. He refused to submit.²³²⁵

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ

أَبَىٰ ۝

^a 23 : 117. ^b 2 : 35; 7 : 12-13; 15 : 27-34; 17 : 62; 18 : 51; 38 : 72-75.

2323. Commentary :

The words *O my Lord, increase me in knowledge* show the great importance that the Qur'ān attaches to the acquirement of knowledge. Even the Holy Prophet to whom was vouchsafed knowledge about the generations that have passed away and about those that are yet to be born (أوتيت علم الأولين والآخرين), is taught to pray that his knowledge may be increased. He is further reported to have said, "Seek knowledge though it may be found in a country as far away as China" (Ṣaḡhīr vol. 1). Elsewhere in the Qur'ān knowledge has been styled as "God's great grace" (2 : 270 & 4 : 114).

The verse also implies that all knowledge is of two kinds : (a) that which is vouchsafed to man through revelation and which has found its perfect manifestation in the Qur'ān which is the last and most perfect Divine teaching; (b) that which man acquires by his own effort and labour. It is this second kind of knowledge for the acquisition of which man is enjoined in the present

verse to make ceaseless effort.

The verse also implies that the Qur'ān will come to be increasingly read and followed.

2324. Important Words :

عَهِدْنَا (We had made a covenant). عَهِدَ means, he promised. عَهِدَ الْأَمْرَ means, he knew the affair. عَهِدَ فُلَانٌ وَعَدَهُ means, he guarded and fulfilled his promise. عَهِدَ إِلَىٰ فُلَانٍ means, he enjoined upon him or commanded him and made it a condition for him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse shows that Adam's lapse was only an error of judgment on his part. It was quite inadvertent and involuntary and not at all intentional or deliberate. To err is human and man, however spiritually exalted he might be, is prone to forgetfulness and consequently is sometimes liable to falter.

2325. Commentary :

Who was this Adam who is mentioned in this verse and when and where he lived, is a

pertinent question. Adam, who lived about 6000 years ago is popularly believed to be the first man created by God upon this earth. This view is neither substantiated and proved by facts of history nor supported by the Qur'ān. The truth is that the world has passed through different cycles of creation and civilization, and Adam, the progenitor of the present human race, was only the first link in the present cycle and not the very first man in God's creation. There must have lived many Adams before him. Modern science has computed one million years as the age of human race. (Enc. Brit. 14th Edit., p. 767). It is not claimed that the race which lived before Adam was entirely swept away before he was born. Most probably there had remained a small remnant of the old race and Adam was one of them. But he himself became the progenitor of a new race and the precursor of a new civilization. It is difficult to say whether the original inhabitants of America, Australia, etc. are the progeny of this last Adam, or some other Adam who had gone before him. Iraq is considered by archaeologists to be the place where Adam lived. See also 2 : 31 and 7 : 12.

The expression اسجدوا لآدم (submit to Adam) does not mean, "prostrate before Adam", because prostration before anything or being except God is, according to the Qur'ān, a heinous sin and therefore completely forbidden (41 : 38). So prostration before Adam by way of worship being opposed to the express teaching of the Qur'ān, a command to that effect could never

have proceeded from God. The expression therefore has evidently been used here in the sense of "obey Adam" or "submit to Adam" i. e. "assist him in the discharge of his great duties." This is a Divine command which is given to the angels and through them to all men whenever a Messenger of God appears in the world. A reference to this fact is to be found in a famous saying of the Holy Prophet. He is reported to have said: "When God loves a person He communicates this fact to the Arch-angel Gabriel who also begins to love him and proclaims in the Heavens that God loves a certain person. Upon this all the angels in Heaven also begin to love him. The process continues till the person comes to be loved by all good and righteous men on earth" (Bukhārī, *kitāb bad'al-Khalq*). Thus the command to the angels to submit to Adam applied to *Iblīs* also. Elsewhere it is expressly stated in the Qur'ān (7 : 13) that *Iblīs* was also commanded to submit to Adam. So there is no point in the objection that as only the angels were commanded to submit, *Iblīs* could not have been justifiably called to account for not carrying out this command.

أبى (he refused). *Iblīs* refused to obey Adam because (1) he considered the teaching of Adam to be against his interests; (2) he looked upon Adam as of lower status to himself; (3) he regarded the ideals of Adam as incapable of being achieved and because also (4) he led a life of deceit and falsehood. See also 2 : 35, 36, 37.

118. Then We said, 'O Adam, "this is an enemy to thee, and to thy wife; so let him not drive you both out of the garden, lest thou come to grief."²³²⁶

119. 'It is *provided* for thee that thou wilt not hunger therein, nor wilt thou be naked."²³²⁷

120. 'And that thou wilt not thirst therein, nor wilt thou be exposed to the sun."²³²⁸

نَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا

يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى ⑪٨

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى ⑪٩

وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَصْحَى ⑫٠

٤ 7 : 23; 18 : 51.

2326. Commentary :

الجنة (the garden) does not refer to Heaven or Paradise but only to the garden-like place where Adam was first made to live. The word cannot refer to Heaven; first, because it was on the earth that Adam was made to live, as the words: "I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth" (2 : 31) indicate; and secondly, because Heaven is a place from where no one having once entered it can ever be expelled (15 : 49), whereas Adam was compelled to leave the الجنة, referred to in this verse. Recent archaeological researches show that the place where Adam was made to dwell was the garden of Eden which lay near Babylon in Iraq, and which was given this name on account of the great fertility of its soil (Enc. Brit. under "Ur"). See also 2 : 35, 36.

The Bible also lends support to this view. It says: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom He had formed" (Gen. 2 : 8).

The verse means to warn Adam that if he succumbed to the blandishments held out to him by *Iblīs* and accepted his advice, he would become deprived of الجنة i.e. the life of bliss, comfort and spiritual contentment which he had formerly enjoyed.

2327. Commentary :

See next verse.

2328. Commentary :

The reference in this and the preceding verse seems to be to the amenities and comforts which are the concomitants of civilized life. These two verses point to the fact that to provide food, clothing and housing to its people which are their primary necessities of life is the first duty of a civilized government and that a society can only be called civilized when all its members are provided with these necessities. Mankind will continue to suffer from social upheavals and the moral tone of human society will never really improve unless economic inequalities of such a serious nature that some sections of society roll in wealth and others die of starvation, are done away with. Adam is told in these verses that he will live in a place where amenities and necessities of life will be adequately available to all its inhabitants. This state of affairs has been described elsewhere in the Qur'an in the words, *And eat therefrom plentifully wherever you will* (2 : 36). The verse under comment also shows that with Adam began a new social order and that he laid the foundations of a kingdom which ushered in the era of social progress of man.

121. But "Satan whispered evil suggestions to him. He said, 'O Adam, shall I lead thee to the tree of eternity, and to a kingdom that never decays?'²³²⁹

فَوَسَّوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَرَاكَ عَلَى
شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبُلُ ۝١٣٩

^a 2 : 37; 7 : 21.

2329. Important Words :

شیطان (Satan) is either derived from شطن or شاط and means, (1) the being who is not only himself far from truth but also turns others away from it; and (2) the being who burns with hate and anger and is lost (Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 2 : 15.

Commentary :

In common usage شیطان signifies (1) the evil spirit i.e. Satan; (2) anybody who greatly transgresses proper limits and is excessively proud and rebellious; (3) any evil propensity or inclination. شیطان (Satan) is a very general term and is of much wider significance than إبليس (Iblīs), for whereas Iblīs is the name given to the Evil Spirit who belonged to the *Jinn* and refused to serve Adam, thereafter becoming the leader of the forces of evil, شیطان is any evil or harmful being or thing, whether a spirit or a human being or an animal or a disease, etc. The Qur'ān mentions إبليس and شیطان side by side wherever the story of Adam is given, but everywhere a distinction is observed between the two. Wherever the Qur'ān speaks of the being who, unlike the angels, refused to serve Adam, it invariably mentions the name Iblīs and wherever it speaks of the being who beguiled Adam and became the means of his being turned out

of الجنة (garden) it mentions the name "Satan."

This distinction, which is most significant and which has been maintained throughout the Qur'ān, shows that Iblīs and Satan are two aspects of the same being or person. When he refuses to believe in Adam and to submit to him, he is called Iblīs but when he translates his refusal into action and opposes him and puts all sorts of obstacles in his way and creates difficulties for him, he is called Satan. It may further be added that الشیطان mentioned in connection with Adam was one of his own people.

As for شجرة الخلد (the tree of eternity), the Qur'ān elsewhere makes mention of two شجرة (trees) i.e. شجرة طيبة (good tree) and شجرة خبيثة (evil tree). See 14 : 25 & 27. In the Qur'ān pure things are likened to the former and impure things to the latter. In view of this explanation it appears that Adam was enjoined to avoid quarrels and useless wranglings which are calculated to create discord and disharmony in a family, otherwise there exists in the world no such tree as "tree of eternity" the eating of whose fruit makes a man naked or provides him with the knowledge of good and evil. The "tree" as mentioned in the present verse and elsewhere in the Qur'ān was a certain family or tribe from which Adam was bidden to keep aloof because its members were his enemies.

122. Then "they both ate thereof, so that their shame became manifest to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden. And Adam observed not the commandment of his Lord, so his life became miserable."²³³⁰

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفْنَ
عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وُرْقِ الْجَنَّةِ زَوْعًا أَدْمُرْتَهُ فَغَوَى ۝٢٣٠

^a 7 : 23; 20 : 122.

2330. Important Words :

سَوَاتٍ (shame) is the plural of سَوْءَ which is derived from سَاءَ which means, it was or became evil, foul or abominable. سَوْءَ means, any evil, foul or abominable saying or action or habit or practice; any saying or action of which one is ashamed when it appears and which one would like to hide; any disgracing action or thing; the external portion of organs of generation of a man or of a woman; corpse or dead body; nakedness (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 21.

وَرَق (leaves) is both singular and plural and is substantive noun from the verb وَرَقَ (waraqā). They say وَرَقَ الشَّجَرُ i.e. the tree put forth leaves. أَنْتَ أَوْرَقُ الرَّجُلِ means, the man became rich. أَنْتَ طَيِّبُ الْوَرَقِ means, thou hast a good and righteous progeny. وَرَق means, leaves, foliage; sheet of paper; the prime and freshness of a thing; the young lads of a community. It also signifies the beauty of the things of this world and their resplendence (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 23.

غَوَى (his life became miserable) means, he erred; he deviated from the right way; he acted ignorantly; he failed in his object and was disappointed; he was lost; his life became unpleasant (Aqrab, Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

As a result of acceptance by Adam of Satan's suggestion a split occurred among his people which caused him much distress and mental anguish.

The words, *their shame became manifest*, mean that the evil consequences of their lapse began to appear and they realized their weaknesses. They discovered that by acting upon the evil suggestions of Satan, they had made a grievous mistake and had involved themselves in great trouble. The verse does not mean that their weakness became known to other people but that only Adam and Eve became conscious of it.

As وَرَق also means young lads of a community (see under "Important Words" above) the verse purports to say that as Satan had succeeded in causing a split in Adam's community and some of the spiritually weaker members had gone out of its fold, Adam gathered together the youth and other righteous and good members of the community and with their help began to reorganize his people. It is generally the youth of a community who first accept the teachings of a Divine Messenger because they have no preconceived ideas, prejudices and inhibitions to shed. Their minds are like a clean slate and they find no difficulty in accepting a teaching which appeals to their reason and conscience. See also 7 : 23.

The Bible describes Adam's lapse in the words: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of both were opened, and

123. Then his Lord chose him for His grace, and "turned to him with mercy and guided him".²³³¹

124. He said, "Go forth, both of you, from here, some of you being enemies of others. And if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoso will follow My guidance, will not go astray, nor will he come to grief."²³³²

125. 'But 'whosoever will turn away from My Reminder, his will be a strait life, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him up blind'.²³³³

ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ ﴿١٢٣﴾

قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَىٰ ﴿١٢٤﴾

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَىٰ ﴿١٢٥﴾

^a 2 : 38. ^b 2 : 37-39; 7 : 25. ^c 18 : 102.

they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3 : 6-7). Thus whereas, according to the Qur'ān, Adam hid his nakedness with 'the leaves of the garden', which means the young lads or pious and righteous members of the community, according to the Bible he used the fig leaves which in the language of visions also signify righteous and pious people. So there is no contradiction or incongruity between the Quranic and the Biblical statements in this respect.

That Adam's disobedience was not deliberate but casual and accidental is evident from v. 116 above.

2331. Commentary :

The words, *Then his Lord chose him*, also indicate that Adam's act of disobedience was inadvertent and unconscious, for an act of deliberate disobedience could not have been followed by the great honour of his being selected by God for His favour. The verse means to say that when Adam realized his mistake and repent-

ed of it and sought God's forgiveness, God took pity on him, chose him for His grace, and revealed to him the right plan by employing which he could successfully foil and defeat Satan's machinations.

2332. Commentary :

The words "both of you", signify two groups of people *i.e.* the followers of Adam and the followers of Satan. The word *كم* (you) and *جميعا* (all of you) also show that the verse refers not to two persons but to two groups of persons or parties. This is also clear from 7 : 25 where the plural number *اهبطوا* (go forth all of you) has been used instead of *اهبطا* (go forth both of you).

It appears that Adam migrated from Iraq, the land of his birth, to a neighbouring country. The emigration was perhaps a temporary one, and he must have returned to his native land not long after. The words, *a provision for a time*, contain a hint about the emigration being a temporary one.

2333. Commentary :

The verse means to say that a person who consigns God to oblivion in this life and leads

126. He will say, 'My Lord, why hast Thou raised me up blind, while I possessed sight *before*?'

127. *God* will say, 'Thus *it was to be*; Our Signs came to thee and thou didst disregard them and in like manner wilt thou be disregarded this day'.²³³⁴

128. And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and believes not in the Signs of his Lord; and the punishment of the Hereafter is surely severer and more lasting.^{2334A}

قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِيْ اَعْمٰى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اَتَتْكَ اٰيٰتُنَا فَنَسِيْتَهَا ۚ وَكَذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنٰسٰى ﴿١٢٧﴾

وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ مَنْ اَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ
وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَدُّ وَاَبْقٰى ﴿١٢٨﴾

a life which obstructs or impedes his spiritual development and growth and thus deprives himself of heavenly light will be born blind at the time of his second birth in the after life. This will be because his soul in this life which serves as a body for the much more spiritually developed soul in the next world had become blind on account of his having led a sinful and depraved life in this world. This is one meaning of the verse.

It may have another interpretation. معيشة (life) signifies the basis of human life and it is not only physical amenities and comforts on which human life depends but other innumerable things also contribute to its sustenance and to man's social, moral and spiritual development. Of these things those people who reject Divine teaching remain deprived and thus they lead a difficult life, full of strains and stresses. Moreover, the sphere of action of the rejectors of Divine teaching is very narrow and limited because they have no grand and great goal before them, as it is belief in Divine attributes and the development by man of these attributes in his person that help to broaden his vision. This is why the Prophets of God and His Elect stand on a much higher moral plane than the votaries of philosophy.

2334. Commentary :

In answer to the disbeliever's protestation as to why he was raised up blind while he was possessed of sight in the former life, God would say that he had become spiritually blind in that world on account of his having led a life of disbelief and sin, and as his soul was to serve as a body for another much more spiritually developed soul in the after life, therefore he was born blind in the Hereafter.

The verse possesses another interpretation. As a disbeliever does not develop in him Divine attributes and remains a stranger to them, so when on the Day of Resurrection those attributes will be manifested in all their splendour and glory, he being stranger to them will not be able to recognize them and thus will stand like a blind man, having had no recollection or remembrance of them.

2334A. Commentary :

The verse presents some difficulty. In the preceding three verses we are told that a disbeliever will be raised up blind in the Hereafter as a punishment for having turned a blind eye to God's attributes and in this verse it is stated that *the punishment of the Hereafter is surely severer and more lasting*, which means that there will be

129. Does it not afford guidance to them "how many generations We destroyed before them, in whose dwellings they *now* walk. Therein verily are Signs for those who are endowed with reason."²³³⁵

أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ
يَنْشُونَ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي

الْبَصَرِ ۝

8 130. And ^bhad it not been for a word already gone forth from thy Lord, and a term *already* fixed, *immediate punishment* would have been inevitable.²³³⁶

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَاجِبًا
مُسْمًى ۝

^a 17 : 18; 36 : 32. ^b 8 : 69; 10 : 20.

another punishment severer and more lasting than the former punishment. What are these two punishments of the Hereafter? This difficulty is solved by vv. 2 : 167 and 6 : 95 wherein it is stated that when disbelievers will be disowned by their false gods and will be left alone, the falsity of their beliefs will dawn on them and consequently their remorse and frustration will be bitter in the extreme. That bitter realization will constitute the first punishment and the torment of Hell will form the second and severer punishment.

2335. **Commentary :**

The verse embodies a perpetual warning for the deniers of Divine Messengers that they will ultimately come to grief. It is an invariable and immutable Divine law that rejection of Divine teaching lands the rejectors in utter ruin and destruction.

2336. **Important Words :**

لزاماً (inevitable) is derived from لزم. They say لزمه i.e. it necessarily or inseparably

belonged to it, clove or adhered to him or it. لزم الامر means, the affair became incumbent upon him. ألزمه شيئاً means, he obliged him to do or endure a thing or He (God) decreed or ordained to him a thing ; he made a thing cleave to him or he made him to cleave to a thing. لزماً means, death ; reckoning; such as cleaves fast ; a thing inseparable ; decision in a case (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The reference in the words, *a word already gone forth*, is to the Divine declaration contained in the verse "My mercy encompasses all things" (7 : 157) i.e. God in His infallible wisdom has decreed that His attribute of mercy will continue to transcend all His other attributes. Or the reference may be to the verse "And Allah would not punish them while thou wast amongst them" (8 : 34). In this case the words "a term already fixed" refer to the battle of Badr.

131. Bear patiently then what they say, and “glorify thy Lord with *His* praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and glorify *Him* in the hours of the night and at the sides of the day, that thou mayest find true happiness.”²³³⁷

132. And ^bstrain not thine eyes after what We have bestowed on some classes of them to enjoy *for a short time*—the splendour of the present world—that We may try them thereby. And the provision of thy Lord is better and more lasting.²³³⁸

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ
طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ أَنَاثِ اللَّيْلِ
فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ ۝
وَلَا تُمَدِّدْ عَيْنِيكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ
زُخْرَءَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ
خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ۝

^a 17 : 79-80; 30 : 18-19; 50 : 40-41. ^b 15 : 89; 26 : 206-208; 28 : 61-62.

2337. Important Words :

إِنَى (hours) is the plural of إِنَى (inyun) and إِنَى (inan) and أَنَى (anyun). All these are derived from أَنَى (ana) which means, its time came ; it was or became or drew near; it attained to its full state. إِنَى (inyun) means, an hour or a short portion of time, or an indefinite time; a time of the night; any hour of the night. مَضَىٰ إِنَى مِنَ اللَّيْلِ means, a time of the night passed (Lane & Aqrab).

اطْرَاف is the plural of طَرَف and means, sides of the day; parts of the day (Aqrab).

Commentary :

Some Commentators of the Qur’ān are of the view that by the glorification of God at the hours mentioned in the verse are meant the hours of the five daily Prayers; the words “before the rising of the sun” signifying the morning Prayer; and the words “before its setting” the late afternoon (‘Asr) Prayer ; and the expression “and glorify Him in the hours of the night” signifying the evening (Maghrib) and night Prayer (‘Ishā), while the words “at the sides of the day” signifying afternoon (Zuhr) Prayer. But whatever the

words of the verse may mean it is quite clear that in order to obtain success in life and satisfaction of the mind it is very essential to remember God and glorify Him. God’s constant remembrance is specifically suited to illumine the soul and to bring about peace of mind.

2338. Important Words :

زُهْرَة (splendour) is noun-infinitive from زَهَرَ which means, it shone or glistened; it gave light or shone brightly; it was clear in colour; he was or became beautiful. زُهْرَة الدُّنْيَا means, the beauty and splendour of the present world or life; the abundance of its goods or comforts; its goods, finery or beauty and splendour (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

All international jealousies and rivalries which result in wars and consequently in much human misery and bloodshed are the result, direct or indirect, of a mad hunger for material wealth and physical comforts. Muslims are warned not to cast covetous looks on the wealth and riches of other people and not to think that the acceptance of Islam by the wealthy people only

133. And "enjoin Prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. We ask thee not for provision; it is We that provide for thee. And the end is for righteousness.²³³⁹

134. And they say, 'Why does he not bring us a Sign from his Lord?' Has there not come to them the clear evidence of what is *contained* in the former Books?²³⁴⁰

135. And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before *the coming of this Messenger*, they would have surely said, "Our Lord, wherefore didst Thou not send to us a Messenger that we might have followed Thy commandments before we were humbled and disgraced?"

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ
رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى ﴿٣٣﴾

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا يَأْتِينَا بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ أَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ
بَيِّنَةٌ مَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ﴿٣٤﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا
لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ نَذِلَّ وَنَخْزَى ﴿٣٥﴾

^a 19 : 56; 33 : 34. ^b 28 : 48.

will add to its glory and power and will accelerate its progress. On the contrary, material wealth will prove a source of great affliction and distress for nations hankering after it. In fact mad competition for the acquisition of wealth has brought all the misery to the world. Rivalries among Western nations know no end and they have already caused two highly destructive wars and there is no knowing when humanity is to be thrown into the vortex of a third war, far more destructive than its two predecessors.

2339. Commentary :

The verse draws attention to the fact that observance of Prayers is the key to all success in life and to moral and spiritual food. Prayer, in fact, is the true and real spiritual favour that God has bestowed upon man, if only he knew it.

2340. Important Words :

آية here means a great Sign or the Sign of punishment. See also 2 : 130 & 19 : 11.

Commentary :

The words, *Has there not come to them clear evidence of what is contained in the former Books*, may mean : (1) is not the argument sufficient to convince them that in the times of former Prophets also disbelievers continued to demand Signs in spite of many Signs having been shown to them and that this fact is recorded in the former Scriptures ; (2) does not the fact constitute a sufficient guide to them that the prophecies made in the former Scriptures about the advent of a great Prophet are being fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet ; and (3) is not the fact sufficient to convince them that similar Signs have been shown to them as were shown in the times of the former Prophets ?

136. Say, 'Each one is waiting; wait ye, therefore, and you will know who are the people of the right path and who follow *true* guidance.'²³⁴¹

قُلْ كُلٌّ مُتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَصْحَابُ
عِصْيَانِ الْكَرْبِ وَالْمُتَرَبِّصُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ

2341. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that believers are waiting, and disbelievers should also wait, and time

itself will show as to who achieves success and who meets with failure and comes to grief.

CHAPTER 21

AL - ANBIYĀ'

(Revealed before Hijra)

Time of Revelation

It can be stated without fear of contradiction that this is a Meccan *Sūra*, having been revealed very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry. According to Imām Sayūṭī only the 7th verse belongs to the Medinite period (Itqān). Wherry, however, says that the *Sūra* was revealed in the 9th year of the Call. He bases his assumption on the fact that the *Sūra* dwells at some length upon the opposition and hostility of disbelievers to the cause of truth which according to him developed and stiffened towards the later years of the Meccan life. Wherry's inference is not based on facts. This is like saying that because there is a mention in *Sūra* Al-Raḥmān of the joining together of the Mediterranean and the Red Seas and of the plying of big steamships in these two seas and because these events took place towards the later half of the 19th century, therefore, *Sūra* Al-Raḥmān was revealed in that century.

The testimony of the Companions of the Holy Prophet before whose very eyes this *Sūra* was revealed affords most dependable evidence about the time of its revelation. Several of them, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd being most prominent among them, have testified to its having been revealed before the 5th year of the Call. 'Abdullah has stated that *Sūrās* Kahf, Maryam, Ṭāhā and Anbiyā' were revealed very early in the Prophet's ministry and that he had learned them by heart (Bukhārī). As 'Abdullah was a very distinguished and prominent Muslim and an early convert to the new Faith, his testimony must necessarily carry great weight and these *Sūrās* must be taken to have been revealed very early.

Moreover, some parts of *Sūra* Maryam were recited before the Negus in the first few days of the emigration to Abyssinia and as that emigration admittedly took place in the beginning of the 5th year of the Call, therefore the above-mentioned *Sūrās* i.e. Kahf, Maryam and Ṭāhā along with the present *Sūra*, must have been revealed before that time. So the fact is established beyond any reasonable doubt that this *Sūra* was revealed before the 5th year of the Call and that Wherry's assertion possesses no foundation in fact. But why in the face of historical evidence of such unimpeachable integrity he should have persuaded himself to hold such an untenable view, passes our comprehension. It evidently seems to be the result of blind prejudice or at best of crass ignorance.

Arrangement of the *Sūra*

In the existing arrangement of the Qur'ān this *Sūra* finds a place after Ṭāhā. Its immediate connection with Ṭāhā consists in the fact that towards the end of that *Sūra* it was stated that Divine punishment would overtake disbelievers at its appointed time, i.e. when the truth of Islam would

have been brought home to them and they would have persisted in rejecting it and persecuting the Holy Prophet and his followers. The Prophet was enjoined to bear the opposition and persecution of disbelievers patiently and with fortitude. In continuation of this subject the present *Sūra* opens with a warning to disbelievers that the time of their punishment has already arrived and that they will now have to render an account of their actions, but they still continue to wander in the wilderness of heedlessness and disbelief. Thus the subject that disbelievers will suffer punishment for rejection of truth, to which reference was made towards the end of the preceding *Sūra*, has been carried forward in the present *Sūra*.

This is the immediate connection of this *Sūra* with *Ṭāhā*. But it is the subject-matter as a whole which, in fact, constitutes the real connecting link between the present *Sūra* and some of its predecessors. In *Sūra Maryam* some false Christian doctrines were repudiated and rebutted, viz., that Jesus possessed Divine attributes, that he had abrogated the Law and had declared it to be a curse and that salvation depended not on good works but upon Atonement. These false beliefs had led Christians astray. In *Sūra Ṭāhā* a detailed account of Moses was given in order to refute these false doctrines. The Christians were told that Christianity was but a link in the Mosaic Dispensation, and Moses's circumstances constituted a flat repudiation of their doctrines. His whole pride lay in the fact that he was a Law-giving Prophet. If the Law was a curse, then, according to Christian belief, Moses, instead of having been made an object of respect and pride, should have been condemned and denounced. After this, *Sūra Ṭāhā* gave a brief account of the lapse suffered by Adam and thus traced the Christian theory of the original sin to its very root and then repudiated and rebutted it. It was made clear in that *Sūra* that sin formed no part of the heritage of man and that he is punished only for his own trespasses and offences which he should try to get rid of. Next, it was stated that if it was not possible for man to get rid of sin, then the very purpose of Divine punishment is defeated and God's Prophets and His Messengers, instead of holding out warnings, should have given him the comforting message that being a mere creature of circumstances and possessing no volition or discretion he will not be called to account for his actions.

The same subject has been enlarged and expanded in the present *Sūra* and the lesson is driven home that the enemies not of one Prophet but those of all Messengers of God, from Adam to Jesus and from Jesus up to the Holy Prophet Muḥammed, were punished for their wicked deeds and the righteous rewarded for their good actions. If man had inherited sin and if he could not shed it, then there was no sense or justification in punishing the sinners and rewarding the righteous. So the dogma of inherited sin is a baseless invention.

Summary of Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with a warning to disbelievers that Divine punishment is fast approaching but they are deluding themselves into a false sense of security. There never came into the world a Divine Messenger who was not jeered and scoffed at. But out of sympathy with and solicitude for the spiritual well-being of their peoples the Prophets of God invited them to accept truth and be saved. If sin formed a part of man's heritage, then of what avail was this invitation? The *Sūra*

then proceeds to cite some objections of disbelievers, one hackneyed and common-place among them being that the Holy Prophet is an ordinary human being. Another is that his talk is alluring and enticing. A third one is that he sees confused dreams and calls them Divine revelations and even goes so far as to forge lies, and dresses glib lies into elegant poetry and thus seeks to deceive people, while the fourth objection is that if he is a Messenger of God, he should, like the Prophets of yore, bring down Divine punishment upon them. To all these objections the Qur'ān return the one very effective answer that the Holy Prophet is no novelty among Divine Messengers. Like them he is but a man and like them he will succeed and like their enemies his enemies will come to grief.

After this disbelievers are asked to consider, what new burden the Qur'ān imposes upon them that they are bent upon rejecting its Message. Its primary object is to exalt and raise them to moral eminence. As it is God's own revealed Word, its rejectors will not escape punishment. The *Sūra* then goes on to ask disbelievers whether they have ever given the idea their serious consideration that an All-Knowing and Wise God could not have created the universe without a great and grim purpose, and that its creation was intended to serve a noble and sublime object and that those who stand in the way of its fulfilment are bound to fail.

Next, the *Sūra* deals with the all-important subject of the Unity and Oneness of God which forms the basic and most fundamental belief of all religions. When one uniform law, the Qur'ān says again and again, pervades and governs the whole universe, how can the polytheists justify *Shirk* (belief in the plurality of gods)? Belief in the plurality of gods implies disagreement on their part in regard to the management and control of the universe and as evidently there exists no such disagreement, and on the contrary there is perfect order in it, there should be only one Creator and Controller of the whole universe. And why should God have a son?—the Qur'ān further asks, and proceeds to reply that a son is needed only when the father is likely to fall victim to decay or death or when he cannot perform his work single-handed and unassisted. But all such notions about God are blasphemous and unfounded and those whom the polytheists associate with God as partners are themselves subject to Divine laws.

After this the *Sūra* points to another Divine law which is to the effect that when darkness enshrouds the entire face of the earth and the world suffers from a dearth of righteous men, God opens the gates of His mercy upon mankind and Heavenly Water, in the form of Divine revelation, descends upon earth and gives new life to a world steeped in sin and iniquity. The phenomenon of the alternation of light and darkness in the spiritual realm corresponds to a similar phenomenon in the physical world where day and night follow each other. Sometimes it is the sun that brightens and gives warmth to the world, at another time it is the moon that shines at night. Similarly, at one time corruption and moral turpitude reign supreme in the world, at another it is righteousness that predominates. Let not this alternating predominance of spiritual darkness and light in the world delude one into the belief that the creation of the universe has failed in its object. On the contrary, this fact rather points to a striking resemblance that exists between the physical and the spiritual worlds. Thus the presence of sin in the world does not justify the invention of the dogma of Atonement. This dogma, in fact, is the product of another equally false idea that the system

of prophethood has failed. The fact, however, is that the spiritual world has undergone no change after Jesus; neither has goodness increased nor has corruption declined. The Prophets of God come and go. All of them tasted death and so did Jesus and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, and so the world goes on. As the setting of the sun causes no dislocation or derangement in the physical world, so does the death of a Prophet of God cause no disorder in the spiritual world. Every person, and for that matter every Prophet and Messenger of God, has a certain mission in life which he fulfils and then he goes the way of all flesh. The real chain that binds and sustains the entire universe is Almighty God Who is completely immune from death or decay.

Next, the *Sūra* drives home the argument that it is foolish on the part of disbelievers to reject the Holy Prophet on the plea that he is but an ordinary man. They do not try to understand this simple fact that it is not so much the status and position of the bearer of the Qur'ān that matters. What really matters is that it is God Himself Who has sent him with His Message and Who can and will punish disbelievers in this life and even after death. But as He is slow to punish, the ignorant people fall a victim to false pride and heedlessness on that account. They are warned to read the writing on the wall and fear Divine punishment, as their repenting and making amends will prove of no avail when it actually overtook them.

In order to show that the cause of the Holy Prophet will prevail the *Sūra* cites the examples of some former Prophets. Moses, who was stated to be like him (Deut. 18:18) was one of them. The Jews accepted his Message and found salvation and became a great nation. If they needed no belief in Atonement for salvation, why should those to whom the Holy Prophet has addressed his Message need it when this Message is in every respect more comprehensive than were Moses's teachings and has a much wider appeal and comprises all that was best and enduring in the teachings of all former Prophets? Another Prophet was the Patriarch Abraham. He was Jesus's ancestor. He came before Moses. He also warned his people against setting up equals to God. God gave him spiritual light and bestowed upon him the inheritance of a country and he was blessed with a noble son like Isaac and a great grandson like Jacob and all of them were pious and righteous men. And before Abraham had come Noah who also had succeeded in his mission and his enemies also were destroyed. Then there was David, Jesus's great progenitor. He, too, enjoyed a very high spiritual status. So did his son, the Prophet Solomon. All these great Prophets of God attained their high spiritual status and the pleasure of God without believing in Atonement. Similarly, Job suffered much in the cause of God and so did Ishmael and Idrīs and Dhu'l-Kifl and the Prophet Dhu'l-Nūn who bore a close resemblance with Jesus. Then there was Zachariah and his son, the Prophet Yaḥyā. All these chosen servants of God like Jesus were models of noble and righteous conduct and like him they suffered great hardships and privations in the way of God. Then why of all these Prophets Jesus alone should be regarded as son of God and not they?

After the account of these Prophets mention is made of Jesus and his mother, Mary, who became widely known and highly respected. Their circumstances were in no way different from those of the noble Prophets of God mentioned above. Even the unusual birth of Jesus entitled

him to no special spiritual status. The birth of Yaḥyā had also taken place in very exceptional circumstances. If Jesus was born without the agency of a human father, Yaḥyā's birth took place when his father had reached an extreme old age and his mother had become barren and was quite unfit to give birth to a child. Similarly, Jesus's suffering in the cause of truth was no novel thing. Whereas he was only hung on the Cross but taken down alive, Yaḥyā suffered actual death for the sake of God. Then why should only Jesus's death atone for the sins of mankind and not that of Yaḥyā?

Towards the end the *Sūra* points to the phenomenal rise and great material might and dazzling prosperity, progress and power of Gog and Magog—Christian nations of the West. When these nations, it proceeds to say, will have spread all over the world and have occupied every position of power and eminence, and when other nations of the world will have bowed down to them in submission and have paid homage to them, then will the promise about their ultimate destruction be fulfilled. Divine punishment will come down upon them so sudden and swift that they will be taken completely by surprise. All their handiworks, the source and cause of their pride, and all their pomp, glory and grandeur will be destroyed and reduced to ashes and dust.

The *Sūra* ends on the note that the Holy Prophet has been sent as a mercy of God that he may save mankind from the curse of Atonement and may open for the sinners the gates of redemption and Divine Mercy through repentance and Divine Grace and that he may proclaim Unity of God to the whole world and may warn disbelievers of the great punishment that is in store for them.

سُورَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢١)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.²³⁴²

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bNigh has drawn for men their reckoning, yet they turn away in heedlessness.²³⁴³

إِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ
مُعْرِضُونَ ②

3. "There comes not to them any new admonition from their Lord, but they listen to it while they make sport of it.²³⁴⁴

مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوهُ
وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ③

^a See 1 : 1. ^b 54 : 2-3. ^c 21 : 43; 26 : 6.

2342. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

2343. **Commentary :**

As stated above (see Introduction to this *Sūra*) according to Western writers the *Sūra* was revealed towards the ninth or tenth year of the Call. If this assumption be accepted as correct the verse under comment would mean that the time of emigration of Muslims from Mecca has arrived as a result of which circumstances will come into being which will bring about the destruction of material might of the Meccans and their glory will depart. The verse may also be considered as pointing to the spread of Islam in Medina where the foundations had been laid for the future greatness and glory of Islam. It seems strange that the so-called learned Western writers should have blundered into assigning to the revelation of this *Sūra* a date which was very close to the time of the Hijra and the spread of Islam in Medina and thus should have unwittingly provided evi-

dence that the Qur'ān is a Divine Book which contains prophecies according to which a small and weak community within the space of a few years came to occupy a predominant position in a vast country like Arabia, and Mecca which from time immemorial had refused to submit to any conqueror fell to Muslim arms.

The word اقترَب signifies that the early signs of the impending Divine punishment have already begun to appear and yet disbelievers give no heed to this grim fact. It shows that they are completely heedless of the dreadful event that is about to overtake them.

2344. **Commentary :**

In form every Message which a Prophet brings is a new one but in substance and essence it is the same old Message. "I am no new Messenger," the Qur'ān depicts the Holy Prophet as saying with regard to himself (46 : 10). The verse under comment means to say that every new Divine Message in its own time was treated with mockery and derision by disbelievers.

4. *And their hearts are forgetful. And they keep their counsels secret—those who act wrongfully, then say, 'Is this man aught but a human being like yourselves? Will you then accede to magic while you see it?'*²³⁴⁵

لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السِّحْرَ وَأَنْتُمْ
تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

5. *In reply to this the Prophet said, 'My Lord knows what is said in the heaven and the earth. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.'*²³⁴⁶

قُلْ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

2345. Important Words :

لاهيّة (forgetful) is derived from لها. They say لها عنه *i.e.* he became diverted from it so as to forget it (Lane). See also 6 : 33.

أفتأتون (Will you then accede to) is derived from أتى. They say أتيت *i.e.* I came to him or it. أتى البينة ; means, he did the thing ; أتى بالذنب means, he advanced the proof. أتى بالذنب means, he committed the offence. أتيت على الأمر means, I agreed with him or in regard to the affair. أفتأتون السحر means, do you approach or come to, or accede to or yield to magic (Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

The main objection of disbelievers against every Prophet has always been that he is an ordinary man like themselves. This objection has also been mentioned in 14:11; 23 : 25, 34; 26 : 155; 36 : 16 & 64 : 7. It has been answered in 12 : 110; 14 : 12; 16 : 44-45 & 17 : 96. Here this objection is answered in v. 8 below.

It is strange that while on the one hand the disbelievers say that there is nothing in the Holy Prophet above an ordinary man, on the other they concede that he is a magician *i.e.* he

possesses superior intellect. Divine Prophets are called magicians because their teachings produce a magical effect on the listeners. The verse implies an admission on the part of disbelievers that the Qur'ān does possess a fascinating power and it is difficult for an unprejudiced and fair-minded person to reject its teaching.

2346. Commentary :

The subject of the verb قال may both be God and the Holy Prophet.

The particle في means, in; about; regarding. The word السماء may signify heavenly sciences or things connected with the spiritual realm, and the word الأرض may stand for material or worldly sciences.

The verse means to say that the disbelievers reject the Message of the Qur'ān on the plea that they see nothing in the Holy Prophet beyond an ordinary human being but they ignore the patent fact that the All-Hearing and All-Knowing God is at his back. God knows full well all their secret and open plots and machinations against Islam and He hears the prayers of the Holy Prophet and His chosen servants and will frustrate all the evil designs of disbelievers.

6. Nay, they say, 'These are but confused dreams; nay, he has forged it *himself*; nay, "he is but a poet. Let him then bring us a Sign just as the former *Prophets* were sent with *Signs*.'²³⁴⁷

7. No township, before them, which We destroyed, ever believed. Would they then believe?²³⁴⁸

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ بَلْ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ
فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٢٣٤٧﴾

مَا آمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٣٤٨﴾

^a 52 : 31.

2347. Important Words :

آية may here mean a Sign of punishment; or a Sign of the disbelievers' own choice. See also 19 : 11.

اضغاث احلام (confused dreams). See 12 : 45.

Commentary :

In this verse three different objections of disbelievers with regard to the Qur'ān have been mentioned. The first is that the Qur'ān is a mixture of confused dreams. But realizing the untenability of their position, as there exists a beautiful arrangement and order in it and that it forms a connected whole and contains excellent teachings, the disbelievers shift their ground and say that the Holy Prophet has forged it himself. But again realizing that throughout his life the Prophet was by common consent known and looked upon as "the trusty" and "the truthful," they give up this objection also and proceed to accuse him of being a poet and a magician. These objections have been mentioned in an ascending order and the continuous shifting of the ground by disbelievers implies an admission on their part that their objections can stand no examination or scrutiny. The Qur'ān has therefore refused to entertain them here because they carry their own refutation and are self-contradictory and foolish. Further on, however, it has answered these objections in another context.

The demand, *let him then bring us a Sign just as the former Prophets were sent with Signs*, is clearly foolish and insolent. There has never appeared a Prophet in the world who was not confronted with a similar demand. Jesus was so infuriated with the Scribes and the Pharisees when they said: "Master, we should see a sign from thee" (Matt. 12 : 38), that he exclaimed in extreme anger : "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12 : 39). The refusal on the part of the Qur'ān to entertain the disbelievers' demand in the manner they expected it, does not imply that no Sign had been or was to be shown to them. It only means to demonstrate that the demand is foolish and insolent and that heavenly Signs differ from age to age and therefore the Signs that would be shown by the Holy Prophet would be different from those that were shown by Moses or Jesus and for that matter by any other Prophet.

The word شاعر (poet) while meaning one who composes verses also signifies a person who plays with the sentiments and susceptibilities of men. Here the word has been used preferably in the latter sense.

2348. Commentary :

The verse means to say that if disbelievers demand a "Sign of punishment," then that too

8. ^aAnd We sent none as Messengers before thee but men to whom We sent revelations. So ask the people of the Reminder, if you know not.²³⁴⁹

9. ^bAnd We did not give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they to live for ever.²³⁵⁰

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا

أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ①

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا

كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ ②

^a 12 : 110 ; 16 : 44. ^b 25 : 21.

is a foolish demand because when punishment overtook them and they were destroyed, how would they believe?

The verse does not mean that the Quraish of Mecca would not believe in the Holy Prophet after Divine punishment overtook them because it is a known fact of history that they did believe in him after Mecca, the centre and source of their glory and prosperity, fell. What the verse signifies is that while the peoples of the former Prophets, with the solitary exception of Prophet Jonah's people, did not believe in them after they were actually visited with punishment, the Holy Prophet's people would have the opportunity and good luck to believe in him even after having been overtaken by Divine punishment in the form of fall of Mecca, the destruction of their idols and the departure of their glory and prestige. Ordinarily, after having suffered a crushing defeat and being wholly at the mercy of the Holy Prophet, they should have received condign punishment which they amply deserved but they were forgiven with a magnanimity unparalleled in the annals of human history, and then they believed in the Prophet.

2349. **Commentary :**

أهل الذكر may signify: (a) the former Prophets; (b) their followers; and (c) the Muslims, i.e. the

followers of the Qur'ān because it has also been called الذِّكْر (15 : 10; 16 : 45; 21 : 51 & 36 : 70).

This and the following verse contain the answer to the objection embodied in the words, *Is this man aught but a human being like yourselves* (v. 4 above). The verse purports to say that the former Prophets were also ordinary mortals like the Holy Prophet and yet they (the Meccans) believe in them. It further implies that in spite of being ordinary men they succeeded in their mission and their enemies were destroyed. The opponents of the Holy Prophet should not therefore delude themselves into the false satisfaction that as he is an ordinary human being his rejection will do them no harm. For a fuller explanation of the present verse see 16 : 44.

2350. **Commentary :**

Though disbelievers of all the Prophets believed them to be ordinary mortals, yet curiously enough the objection was invariably repeated to every Prophet that like ordinary mortals "he eats and drinks and walks about the streets and is subject to all human needs and demands of the body" (25 : 8). An implied reference is made in the present verse to this inconsistent attitude of disbelievers. It purports to say that disbelievers in the time of the Holy Prophet cannot, or do not wish to, understand

10. Then We fulfilled to them *Our* promise; and We saved them and those whom We pleased; and We destroyed the transgressors.²³⁵¹

ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَاهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُمْ وَمَنْ نَشَاءُ
وَأَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِينَ ①

11. We have now sent down to you a Book which *makes provision for your glory and eminence*; will you not then understand?²³⁵²

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ②

this simple fact that Prophets are raised as 'models' for men, and how could they be models for them if they were not men like them and were not like them subject to the demands of the body but belonged to any other species of creation? As human beings they were not and could not be immune from the demands of the flesh or from decay or death.

2351. Commentary :

The verse embodies an effective answer to all the objections that were raised in v. 6 above, viz., (a) "these are but confused dreams," (b) "nay, he has forged it;" (c) nay, "he is a poet." The answer consists in the fact that every Prophet receives from God certain promises and prophecies about the ultimate success of his mission and the defeat and discomfiture of his enemies, and that these prophecies are literally fulfilled. The truth of this fact has been demonstrated throughout the ages in the time of every Prophet of God. The verse purports to say that if what the Holy Prophet claims to have received from God are mere confused dreams and not Divine revelations and if he is an impostor and a liar then how could the great prophecies about the triumph of his cause and the failure of his opponents made at a time when there appeared no likelihood of their being fulfilled, come to be true? Moreover, as a poet the Prophet could only compose elegant verse or could play with the emotions of men as poets generally do, but he

could not bring about a wonderful change in the lives of his followers as he did and could not see into the future and make prophecies which in the teeth of the opposition of his powerful enemies and in spite of his own utter helplessness were fulfilled to the very letter. The answer seems to be as emphatic and effective as the objections are foolish and flimsy.

2352. Important Words :

ذِكْرُكُمْ (your eminence). ذَكَرَ means, remembrance, praise or eulogy; eminence or honour; renown, fame or reputation. See also 2 : 41; 6 : 69 & 15 : 7.

Commentary :

The argument begun in the previous verse is continued in the present one. The verse means to say that not only will the deniers of this Message come to grief and its followers achieve progress and prosperity and will rise from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest pinnacle of material and spiritual glory, but this fact will also constitute an infallible proof that the Qur'ān is neither forgery nor poetry nor a collection of confused dreams but the true Word of the Almighty God, the Creator of heavens and earth.

The verse incidentally implies the refutation of the Christian doctrine that the Law is a curse, by forcefully asserting that through the Qur'ān which is the final Book of Divine Law, its followers will achieve honour, glory and power.

- 2 12. "And how many a township that acted wrongfully have We utterly destroyed, and raised up after it another people!"²³⁵³

وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And when they felt Our punishment, lo! they began to flee from it.²³⁵⁴

فَلَمَّا أَحَسُّوا بَأْسَنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. 'Flee not, but return to the luxuries in which you exulted, and to your dwellings that you might be approached and consulted as before.'²³⁵⁵

لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَى مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسْكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. They said, 'Alas for us, we were indeed wrongdoers!'

قَالُوا يَٰوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

^١ 7 : 5 ; 22 : 46 ; 28 : 59 ; 50 : 37 ; 65 : 9 .

2353. Important Words :

قصمنا (We utterly destroyed) is derived from قصم . They say قصم الشيء i.e. he broke the thing into pieces; he broke it completely, utterly. قصم الرجل means, he destroyed the man. قصم الله ظمير الظالم means, God afflicted the transgressor with calamity and broke his back (Aqrab).

قرية meaning a township signifies its inhabitants. See also 12 : 83.

Commentary :

ظلم meaning the improper use of God-given powers and faculties, the verse implies that all transgressions and sins flow from their misuse.

2354. Important Words :

يركضون (they began to flee) is derived from ركض which means, he moved his leg or foot; ركض الفرس means, he repelled him. ركض means, he spurred or goaded the horse to run. ركض منه means, he fled from it (Aqrab & Lane).

2355. Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers generally are big men and hold very important positions in society. They are looked upon as leaders of men and people resort to them for consultation and seek advice and guidance from them in their private affairs. This eminence of their position makes them arrogant and they disdainfully turn away from the exhortations of Divine Messengers. But when they are overtaken by heavenly punishment, they seek to flee from the town in which they hold such high position and enjoy great influence. The verse gives a graphic description of the condition of these so-called big people when punishment overtakes them. The words of the verse seem to have been used ironically.

The expression لعلكم تسألون besides the meaning given in the text may also mean, "that you may be called to account for what you did."

16. And this ceased not to be their cry till We mowed them down, reduced to ashes.²³⁵⁶

فَمَا زَالَتْ تِلْكَ دَعْوَاهُمْ حَتَّى جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيدًا

خَبِيدِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

17. "And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in play."²³⁵⁷

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَإِغْوٍ ﴿١٨﴾

18. If We had wished to find a pastime, We would surely have found it in what is with Us if at all We were to do *such a thing*.²³⁵⁸

لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ لَهُوَ لَا تَخَذُنُهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا

إِنْ كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

415 : 86 ; 38 : 28 ; 44 : 39.

2356. Important Words :

خامدين (reduced to ashes) is the plural of خامد which is active participle from خمد . They say خمدت النار i.e. the fire subsided. خمدت الحمى means, the vehemence of the fever became allayed. خمد also means, he (a sick man) fainted or swooned; or he died. خامد means, silent; from whom no voice is heard; silent and dead or silent, having died, and become like extinguished ashes (Lane).

حصيداً (mown down). See 10 : 25.

Commentary :

The verse gives a graphic description of the people who are visited by the wrath of God. They are completely ruined. They lose all power and capacity for revival. The surest sign that the decline and downfall of a people has begun is that all their ambitions and aspirations become extinguished. The very will to live dies in them. They despair of their future and lose all initiative and thus to all intents and purposes become a dead people.

2357. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when the universe has not been created as a mere pastime and sport and a little reflection over its creation reveals the great wisdom underlying it, the

creation of man who is its axis and centre must also have been designed to serve a grand and sublime object. At another place the Qur'ān says that man is God's vicegerent on earth and he has been created to serve as a mirror to reflect the beautiful image of his Creator (2 : 31).

2358. Important Words :

لهوآ (pastime) is here taken by some (in the dialect of Yemen) to mean a 'son' or 'wife'. Taken in this sense of the word, the verse would mean, "If We had wished to take a son or wife, We should have made them of Our kind and not of human species." The verse constitutes an effective argument against the sonship of Jesus. The particle ان means both 'if' and 'not,' and the clause ان كنا فاعلين may mean (a) if We would do this; (b) We would not do this.

Commentary :

The substance of the verse is that it is inconsistent with the Dignity and Majesty of God that He should have created this universe without a great object. If its creation had not been intended to serve a great and sublime purpose, God would not have sent His Messengers and Prophets and would not have revealed His will to

19. Nay, ^aWe hurl the truth at falsehood, and it breaks its head, and lo! it perishes. And woe be to you for that which you ascribe to God.²³⁵⁹

20. To Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. ^bAnd those who are in His presence do not disdain to worship Him, nor do they weary;²³⁶⁰

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ يُدْمِغُهُ فَأَذَا
هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ^{١٩}
وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ
لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ^{٢٠}

^a 17 : 82; 34 : 50. ^b 7 : 207; 41 : 39.

them. The very object of the creation of man demanded that when spiritual darkness spreads over the world, God should have sent a Messenger "to bring back the erring flock into the fold of the Master." It is implicit in the belief in the existence of God that the universe should have been created to serve a great and noble purpose.

2359. Important Words :

نَقْذِفُ (We hurl) is derived from قَذَفَ. They say قَذَفَهُ i.e. he cast an accusation at him; he aspersed or he reviled; defamed or upbraided him; he cast or threw it. قَذَفَ بِقَوْلِهِ means, he spoke without thinking or deliberation. يَقْذِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ means, they utter conjecture; they guess. يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ means, God utters truth or hurls truth at falsehood (Lane & Aqrab).

يُدْمِغُهُ (breaks its head). دَمَغَهُ means, he broke or struck his head so that the wound or stroke reached to the دِمَاعُ i.e. brain (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Truth must prevail in the world and falsehood is never allowed to succeed. It seems to prosper for a little while but ultimately it perishes. This irrefutable fact is writ large on the history of all religions. The verse purports to say that if the universe had been created without a great

object, God would not have revealed Himself to man and Divine Messengers would not have appeared through whom truth is established in the world. It also embodies a prophecy that as the result of the Holy Prophet's advent idolatry will disappear from Arabia never to return and truth will prosper and prevail and the worship and Unity of God will become firmly established in the land.

2360. Important Words :

يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ (they weary) is derived from حَسِرَ (hasira) or اسْتَحْسَرَ meaning, he was or became weary and tired. حَسِرَ الدَّابَّةَ means, the beast was fatigued so that it was left to remain where it was. حَسِرَ الْبَصَرَ means, the eye became weak and fatigued by looking for long. حَسِيرٌ means, tired, fatigued or jaded by much travel; grieving or regretting most intensely (Lane & Aqrab).

See also 17 : 30.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that because whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to God, it is inconceivable that He should have allowed His servants to suffer spiritual death for lack of heavenly guidance. No sane person would destroy his own handiwork, much less God, the Source of all wisdom. This is why, from time immemorial He has been sending His Messengers to guide man to truth.

21. They glorify *Him* night and day; *and* they flag not.²³⁶¹

22. Have they taken gods from the earth who raise the dead?²³⁶²

23. If there had been in them (the heavens and the earth) other gods beside Allah, then surely both would have gone to ruin. Glorified then be Allah, the Lord of the Throne, far above what they attribute *to Him*.²³⁶³

يَسْبَحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهًا مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يَشْرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلَ إِلَهَةٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

The verse further gives some marks of the true servants of God. They are not tired of serving God and humanity. They do not accept a Prophet under a momentary impulse and then under the stress of hardships and privations lose heart. Once they accept the truth, they stick to it through thick and thin. Their zeal and enthusiasm for the service of truth never flag or fail. They never weary of serving God's creatures and glorifying Him. On the contrary, the worship of God is a source of delight to them and a means of relief from worries and anxieties for them (13 : 29). "The cheer of my eyes is in Prayer," the Holy Prophet is reported to have said (Nasa'i).

2361. Important Words :

يفترون (they flag) is derived from فتر . They say فتر الشيء i.e. the thing remitted or became still after vehemence or it became gentle after vehemence. فتر من عمله means, he flagged or became remiss in his work. فتر الحر means, the heat abated or flagged after being intense and vehement. فتر الوحي means, the revelation stopped or its coming discontinued (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 20.

2362. Commentary :

Creating or raising the dead to life is the exclusive attribute and prerogative of God. Neither Jesus nor any other person can share in this Divine attribute. The reference to this attribute is intended to smash the divinity of

Jesus which, in particular, forms the subject-matter of these verses.

2363. Commentary :

The verse constitutes a most effective and conclusive argument against polytheism. Even atheists cannot deny that perfect order pervades and permeates the whole universe. This order points to the fact that one uniform law governs it, and the unity of laws proves the Unity of the Maker and Controller of the universe. If there had been more than one God, then more than one law would have governed the universe because for a god it is necessary to create a universe with its own laws; and thus disorder and confusion would have been the inevitable result and the whole universe would have gone to pieces. Moreover, the very word اله (meaning a Being Who is the object of our utmost love, obedience and submission and Who possesses perfect powers and attributes) shows that such a Perfect Being can only be one at one time. It is manifestly absurd to say that three gods, equally perfect in all respects, are jointly the creators and controllers of the universe. The fact of the three gods doing the same thing which One Perfect God can and should do implies their imperfection and an imperfect being cannot be our اله (One Who is worthy of our adoration).

24. He cannot be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned.²³⁶⁴

25. "Have they taken gods beside Him? Say, 'Bring forth your proof. This is the Reminder of those with me, and the Reminder of those before me.' Nay, most of them know not the truth, and so they turn away."²³⁶⁵

26. And We sent no Messenger before thee but We revealed to him, *saying*, 'There is no God but I; so worship Me *alone*.'²³⁶⁶

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ ۚ
أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
هَذَا ذِكْرٌ مَنْ مَعِيَ وَذِكْرٌ مَنْ قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ۚ
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ
أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ۚ

^a 18 : 16 ; 23 : 118 ; 27 : 65.

2364. Commentary :

The verse means to say that as God's works are perfect and absolutely free from defect or blemish, therefore He cannot be found fault with and being the One and undisputed Master and Controller of the whole universe He is answerable before nobody. The verse points to the perfection and completeness of the order in the universe and therefore to the perfection of its Author and Controller and hence to His Unity. It continues the argument begun in the previous verse. It also signifies that God's authority is supreme while all other beings and things are subject to His authority. This constitutes another argument against polytheism.

2365. Commentary :

The verse gives another argument about the Unity of God. The Holy Prophet is here enjoined to ask his people to go through the Qur'ān and other revealed Scriptures and then tell him whether they find in them any deferential reference to polytheism or to permission to worship other gods besides the One True God. "This is the constant doctrine of all the sacred Books," says Sale in his "Introduction to the Qur'ān," "not only the Qur'ān, but also those Scriptures which were revealed in former ages,

all of them bear witness to the great and fundamental truth of the Unity of God."

Taking ذكر in the sense of honour, eminence etc. (see 15 : 7), the verse would mean that the Qur'ān is a source of honour for those with the Holy Prophet and for those before him *i.e.* it will raise its followers from depths of degradation to great heights of honour and eminence, and it has cleared Divine Prophets and other righteous servants of God of the charges and accusations that were imputed to them in former Scriptures.

2366. Commentary :

The verse gives a third argument in favour of the Unity of God. It purports to say that all the Divine Messengers and great religious Reformers who appeared among different nations and countries at different times testified with one voice to the Oneness of God which was their common mission. In spite of the fact that with the passage of time the teachings of these Prophets became tampered with and were subjected to distortions and interpolations, the belief in the Unity of God continued to be the basic principle of all these teachings. These Prophets and Messengers appeared among all nations and peoples and the greatest of all, the

Holy Prophet Muḥammad, appeared at a time when the whole world was immersed in the Cimmerian darkness of moral turpitude, and idol-worship was rife among every people and country in one form or another and was practised in its most heinous form in Arabia where the Holy Prophet preached his Message of the Oneness of God. He carried on such an effective and relentless campaign against idolatry that it disappeared from Arabia never to return. Not only did he condemn and forbid idol-worship and enjoin and impress upon his people the worship of One True God but also gave unanswerable arguments in support of monotheism and against polytheism and he fully succeeded in engendering in the minds of his followers an invincible faith in Divine Unity and an equally implacable hatred for *Shirk*—setting up equals with God. In four short sentences of one of its shortest *Sūrās*—*Al-Ikhlāṣ*, the Qur'ān has refuted and demolished in a most beautiful and effective manner four forms of polytheism. The first verse proclaims the absolute Unity of God. It says: "Say, He is Allah, the One." It means that out of ignorance and perversity man invents and indulges in most fantastic theories and ideas about God. But the central and pivotal fact about the Divine Being remains that He is absolutely One in every respect and manner. He is neither the beginning nor the end of anything and He is not like anything, nor anything is like Him. To regard anything like Him is to impugn His absolute Unity.

In the words, "Allah, the Independent and Besought of all," the Qur'ān has demolished the second kind of *Shirk* i.e. to ascribe Divine powers and attributes to other beings and things. The verse says that God has need of nobody but all beings and things have need of Him. It is therefore foolish and futile to have recourse to beings and things which themselves are wholly

dependent upon God. The third verse, viz., "He begets not, nor is He begotten" refutes and repudiates the third kind of polytheism i.e. the doctrine of God being the father or son of anybody. The verse means to say that God is eternal and everlasting. He has begotten no son who should take His place, nor is He begotten of anyone from whom He should have inherited His Divine powers and attributes. He was always Independent and Besought of all and will ever be so. So we should worship Him and call on Him alone for the fulfilment of our needs and requirements. The verse "And there is none like unto Him," exposes the folly and futility of the fourth kind of *Shirk*. It signifies that it is beyond any created thing to be His partner in Divinity i.e. to be like Him in His person or attributes. God is far exalted and above that to which man can aspire. However high man may rise, he cannot even touch the fringes of the precincts of Divinity and will ever remain God's servant.

This is the most sublime conception of absolute Unity of God as taught and inculcated by the Qur'ān.

At another place (2 : 256) the Qur'ān has shed further light on Divine Unity. It says : "There is no God but Allah, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep (i.e. no interruption ever takes place in His works). To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that will intercede with Him except by His permission (i.e. God grants the prayers of His servants but no one should think that He can compel God to accept His prayer. It is after He has granted the permission to any of His servants that he can intercede with Him). He knows what is before them and what is behind them (i.e. He knows the past and the

27. "And they say, 'The Gracious God has taken to Himself a son.' Holy is He. Nay, they are *only* honoured servants.²³⁶⁷

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ
مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. They speak not before He speaks, and they act *only* by His command.²³⁶⁸

لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

^a 2 : 117; 4 : 172; 10 : 69; 19 : 89-90.

future. His knowledge is complete and all-comprehensive because full control is not possible without complete knowledge and complete knowledge is the never-failing accompaniment of absolute Unity). And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases (*i.e.* man can accomplish nothing except with the help of the knowledge that he receives from God). His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth (*i.e.*, not an atom moves in the heavens and the earth without His permission and every particle is subject to His control). And the care of them burdens Him not (*i.e.*, the universe will continue to exist and function under the never-failing supervision and protection of God). And He is the High (*i.e.* every atom of the universe bears witness to His Almightiness and He is so exalted that human reason cannot attain to full comprehension of Him); and yet He is great (*i.e.* He is so manifest in His great works that every honest seeker after Him can attain to communion with Him). This is the very high and noble conception of Divine Unity which the Holy Prophet gave to the world and for which he worked and suffered. He told the people of the world that Divine Unity consists in the fact that man should rise to such a high stage of spiritual exaltation as to become completely engrossed in One God and become

at one with Him. It is when man reaches this high stage of moral and spiritual development that he can be said to have attained the great object of his creation.

2367. Commentary :

The words "honoured servants" point to the fact that not only Jesus but many other righteous men have been spoken of as God's sons in former Scriptures and like him they have been called God's sons only in a metaphorical sense. But they were nothing more than His honoured servants. In this respect Jesus enjoys no special prerogative. He was only one of the numerous honoured servants of God.

2368. Commentary :

The pronoun 'they' in this verse as the context shows refers to Prophets. The verse means to say that the Prophets of God do not say anything which they are not bidden by God to say. Hence it is inconceivable that anyone of them should have laid claim to Godhead or sonship. Not only do they not say anything unless they are bidden by God to say it but they also do not do anything unless God commands them to do so. The verse establishes the fact that Divine Messengers are incapable of disobeying God or committing a moral offence or sin. Incidentally it establishes the sinlessness of the Prophets.

29.^a He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they intercede not except for him whom He approves, and they act cautiously for fear of Him.²³⁶⁹

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ
إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَرَادَ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And whosoever of them should say, 'I am a God beside Him,' him shall We requite with Hell. Thus do We requite the wrongdoers.²³⁷⁰

وَمَنْ يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَذَلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ
جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

^a 2 : 256 ; 20 : 111.

2369. Important Words :

مشفقون (they act cautiously) is the plural of شفق which is active participle from شفق. They say شفق عليه i.e. he was solicitously affectionate towards him. أشفق منه means, he feared or was cautious of him. إشفاق which is inf. noun means, kindness or affection mixed with fear. Generally it signifies affection; kindness; and fear of the betiding of some evil event, together with sincere or honest advice (Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

The words, "what is before them and what is behind them," may mean; what they did and what they did not or could not do ; or the influences to which they were subjected or the changes which they brought about.

The verse makes it plain that no one can intercede with God except with His permission. The Bible agrees with the Qur'ān in this respect. It says:

If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? (1 Sam 2 : 25).

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them,

neither make intercession to me : for I will not hear thee (Jer. 7 : 16).

See also 2 : 49 & 2 : 256.

2370. Commentary :

It is significant that whereas claimants to Godhead will only be punished in the Hereafter for their false claims, those pretenders and mount-banks who falsely lay claim to prophethood are punished in this very world. They meet with death and destruction and their whole organizations come to nought in this very life (69 : 46-48). This difference in treatment of these two kinds of pretenders is due to the fact that the absurdity of a claim to Godhead is self-evident because no sane person would ever accept a claimant to Godhead as God and therefore such a claimant need not be punished here. But a false claimant to prophethood, if allowed to go scot-free, may succeed in deceiving many innocent people into accepting his false claim; therefore he ultimately meets with defeat, discomfiture and destruction in this very life and is not allowed to live long and his mission is not permitted to prosper.

- 3 31. Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass, then We opened them out? And we made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?²³⁷¹

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا
رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

2371. Important Words :

رتق (a closed-up mass) is inf. noun from رتق (rataqa). They say رتق الثوب *i.e.* he repaired or sewed up the cloth. رتق الشئ means, he repaired or closed up the thing. رتق is the contrary of فتق. The expression فتق المسك means, he took out the musk from the bladder of deer. فتق الثوب means, he slit, rent or opened up the cloth. They say رتق فتقهم *i.e.* he closed up the breach that was between them; he reconciled them. The Arabs say: هو الراتق والفاتق *i.e.* he is the reformer of the affair. The word رتق here means, رتق ذوات رتق *i.e.* things closed up, or better a closed-up mass, and فتق refers to the splitting of the amorphous mass or to the throwing off of the planets of the solar system.

Commentary :

The verse, by pointing to a great scientific truth, draws attention to a spiritual phenomenon of equally great importance. It refers to the pre-material stage of the universe and purports to say that the heavens and the earth or the whole universe or particularly the solar system has developed out of an amorphous or nebular mass. God, in accordance with the laws which He had set in motion, split the mass of matter, and its scattered bits became the units of the solar system ("The Universe Surveyed" by Harold Richards, and "The Nature of the Universe" by Fred Hoyle). God then created all life out of water. The verse seems to imply that like the material universe a spiritual universe

also develops out of an amorphous mass of confused ideas and foolish beliefs. Just as God in His infallible wisdom and in pursuance of a great design split the mass of matter and its scattered bits became the units of the solar system, in the same way He brings about a new spiritual order in a world weltering in the morass of confused ideas. When mankind sinks into an impenetrable gloom of moral turpitude and spiritual atmosphere becomes dense and oppressive, God causes a light to appear in the form of a Heavenly Messenger who shakes up the overspreading spiritual gloom, and out of this confused and lifeless mass of moral depravity and spiritual degeneration a spiritual universe is born which begins to reach out from its centre and eventually embraces the whole earth, receiving life and direction from the impetus behind it. Just as all physical life is created from water, so does spiritual universe receive life from Heavenly Water which is Divine revelation. See also General Introduction.

The words "the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass," in a physical sense may signify that there is no rain from heaven, and the earth becomes parched and dried up and grows no vegetation, and life tends to become extinct. Spiritually speaking they may mean that there is a cessation of Divine revelation and the hearts and brains of men become corrupt and spiritual darkness enshrouds the entire face of the earth. Thus the whole verse may refer both to the general physical

32. "And We have made in the earth firm mountains lest it should quake with them ; and We have made therein wide pathways, that they may be rightly guided."²³⁷²

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a 13 : 4 ; 15 : 20; 16 : 16 ; 31 : 11 ; 77 : 28.

phenomenon and to the cessation of Divine revelation. The words "then We opened them out," may refer to the throwing off of the planets of the solar system. Physically speaking they would mean that God sends down rain from heaven, and spiritually speaking they may signify that Divine revelation descends i.e. a Prophet is raised to whom God reveals Himself and to whom He vouchsafes His Word.

Again spiritually speaking the words "And We made from water everything living" signify that when the period of the cessation of revelation which has been called فترة in the Qur'ān (5:20) ends, God sends a Messenger, who by means of Divine revelation, brings about complete moral revolution among his people and gives, as it were, new life to a spiritually dead people. Alluding to the physical phenomenon the words would mean that when on account of a long period of drought the earth becomes parched and dry, God sends down fresh rain from heaven and the earth begins to bloom and blossom and vibrate with a new life. Thus briefly the verse signifies that as no physical life can exist without water, similarly no spiritual life is possible without the water of Divine revelation.

2372. Important Words :

ان تميد بهم (lest it should quake with them). تميد is derived from ماد which means, it (a thing) was or became in a state of violent motion or commotion; it was or became violently agitated; it turned about or became contorted and convulsed; it quivered or trembled; he bestowed a

benefit or favour. مادت به الارض means, the earth went round with him. The expression ان تميد بهم means, lest it should quake with them, be convulsed with them and go round with them and move about violently (Lane & Aqrab). See also 16 : 16.

فججاً (wide pathways) is the plural of فج which is noun-infinitive from فج (fajja) which means, he opened or separated his two legs while walking. فججت الناقة means, the she-camel opened out her hinder legs for being milked. فج means, a wide and open pathway between two mountains (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse throws light on yet another scientific truth. Geology has established the fact that mountains have, to a great extent, secured the earth against earthquakes. Earthquakes were very common before mountains were created. In the beginning the earth was very hot from inside. When as the result of the intense heat gases were formed in the bowels of the earth, they tried to force a way out, thus causing violent agitations and eruptions in the form of volcanoes which having cooled down took the shape of mountains. ("Marvels and Mysteries of Science" by Allison Hox & Enc. Brit. under "Geology"). To this great scientific truth the words ان تميد بهم (lest it should quake with them) refer. Spiritually speaking the heat of sin and iniquity in the world throws out lava from its volcanoes and brings about moral destruction and then God cools down this fire

33. And We have made the heaven a roof, well protected; yet they turn away from its Signs.²³⁷³

34. And He it is Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, "each gliding along smoothly in its orbit."²³⁷⁴

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا ۖ وَهُمْ عَنْ

آيَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

﴿٢٣﴾

a 36 : 41.

by the spiritual water of Divine revelation and by means of "mountains" which spiritually speaking are Prophets and Divine Reformers.

Taking these words in the sense 'that it may go round with them,' the verse would signify that the mountains are a great help to the earth in moving steadily on its axis. The Qur'ān spoke of the earth as "moving round" long before it was discovered that it was not stationary and moved on its axis and round the sun.

Again mountains, rivers and natural highways are among great Divine blessings. The mountains are natural reservoirs of water and vegetable and mineral wealth; the rivers constitute natural conduits for water, and natural highways make it possible for man to have access to these vast stores of Divine blessings. Spiritually speaking, 'mountains' are the Divine Prophets who are the great reservoirs of heavenly Water and Divine knowledge and 'high ways' (which in the earth are the channels of rivers) represent righteous 'Ulamā' (learned men) and divines who receive guidance from the Prophets and convey it to common men. Just as rivers and streams become dried up when it does not rain on mountains, similarly pious and righteous men disappear from the world when no fresh revelation descends from heaven for a long time. Indeed revelation is as essen-

tial for spiritual life as is water for physical life.

2373. **Commentary :**

The solar system with its sun, moon, planets and stars is a well-ordered and well-regulated system which has existed for millions of years, never having once suffered from the slightest disorder or deviation in the movements of these bodies. These heavenly bodies exercise a very wholesome influence on the terrestrial globe and its inhabitants. Just as a roof is a means of protection from rain, cold and heat for the residents of a house, similarly the heaven serves as a protection for the earth below and heavenly bodies exert their beneficial influence upon mankind. The spiritual universe also has its heaven with its sun, moon, planets and stars.

These bodies of the spiritual heaven also exert their influence on the spiritual life of men. They illumine their lives and provide for them guidance in the night of spiritual darkness. Spiritually speaking the implication in the words "a roof well-protected" is that astrologers and diviners have no access to Divine secrets.

2374. **Important Words :**

فلك (orbit) is derived from فلك (falaka). They say فلك ثدى الجارية i.e. the breast of the girl became round. فلك means, the place of the revolving of the stars i.e. the celestial sphere, the

35. We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee. If then thou shouldst die, shall they live *here* for ever?²³⁷⁵

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنَّ مِتَّ
فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

vault of heavens or the firmament (Lane & Aqrab).

يسبحون (gliding along) is derived from سبج. They say سبج الرجل *i.e.* the man slept and took rest; he went far off in his walk. سبج في الماء means, he talked much. سبج في الكلام means, he glided along in the water and took great delight in it. The word is used metaphorically with regard to the floating or gliding of the stars and about the swift and smooth running of the horse (Aqrab).

Commentary :

Spiritually speaking the sun stands for the Law-bearing Prophets, particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam, and the moon for those Reformers and Prophets who borrow their spiritual light from the Law-bearing Prophets, 'the day' represents the time when a new Prophet makes his appearance in the world and fresh revelation comes down from heaven and 'the night' represents that period when there is spiritual darkness all round and no revelation comes from God.

The verse means to say that the night and the day, the sun and the moon have all been created by God and serve a definite purpose. They all fulfil human needs and are indispensable for man's existence on earth. The significance of the present and the preceding verse is that when God has taken so much care to provide for the physical and material needs of man, it is impossible even to think that He should have neglected to make a similar provision for his spiritual needs.

2375. Important Words :

خلد is syn. with خلود which is infinitive noun from خلد (*khalada*) which means, he stayed for long. خلد بالمكان means, he stayed in the place. خلد الى الارض means, he stuck to the earth. خلد اليه means, he inclined to him. خلد (*khuld*) or خلود means, the immunity of a thing from speedy decay or deterioration and its remaining in a certain condition for a long time. The mountains are called خوالد (*khwālid*) on account of their long life (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse seems to signify that all the different Dispensations and religious systems before the Holy Prophet were decreed and destined to suffer spiritual decay and death and that it was only the Dispensation of the Holy Prophet—the Islamic Dispensation, which was to live and continue till the end of time. That is to say that all avenues to spiritual progress are closed after the Holy Prophet and only the door of Islam is left open to mankind to attain salvation and nearness to God. The words, "if then thou shouldst die shall they live for ever," also seem to signify that if the Islamic Dispensation were to die, which is inconceivable, then there will be no spiritual light left and all humanity will suffer spiritual death. The implication of the verse may also be that no human being is immune from decay or death, not even the Holy Prophet. Eternity and everlastingness are God's own exclusive attributes.

36. Every soul shall taste of death; and We prove you with evil and good by way of trial. And to Us shall you be returned.²³⁷⁶

37. "And when the disbelievers see thee, they only make a jest of thee. They say: 'Is this the one who makes an evil mention of your gods?' while it is they themselves ^bwho reject with disdain the mention of the Gracious God.²³⁷⁷

38. Man is created of haste. I will *certainly* show you My Signs but ask Me not to hasten.²³⁷⁸

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا أَهَذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَهُمْ بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a 25 : 42. ^b 13 : 31.

2376. Commentary :

There are two ways to test the mettle of a person, viz., (a) by making him pass through the fire of trials and tribulations; and (b) by bestowing upon him wealth and material power and prosperity. God tries His servants in both these ways. This is the significance of this verse. Or the verse may mean that God tries man by raising His Prophets and by affording him the opportunity to win His pleasure by accepting and following them; and sometimes when a long period of spiritual darkness ensues and no Divine Reformer is present in the world He gives men of intellect and broad vision an opportunity to follow the dictates of conscience and right teaching which is in harmony with human nature in order that they should, instead of allowing themselves to be carried away like the common run of men by the current of sin and iniquity, establish in the world the usages and practices of God's Prophets.

2377. Commentary :

The words, "Is this the one who makes an evil mention of your gods," are expressive of contempt and contumely for the Holy Prophet on the part of disbelievers. They think it presumptuous on the Prophet's part to speak slightly of their gods. To this contemptuous expression of disbelievers the Qur'ān replies by saying that if they think that it is presumptuous on the part of the Holy Prophet to speak disparagingly of their false gods, what do they think of their own contemptuous rejection of the very mention of the Gracious God ?

2378. Important Words :

The clause خلق الإنسان من عجل means that haste forms a part of man's being and is so prominent a trait of his character and he is so hasty by nature that he can be said to have been created, as it were, out of haste i.e. he has been given a hasty disposition. The words "but ask me not to hasten," support this meaning. At another place in the Qur'ān,

39. "And they say, 'When will this promise *be fulfilled*, if you are truthful?'²³⁷⁹

40. If only the disbelievers knew the time when they will not be able to ward off the fire from their faces nor from their backs, and they will not be helped!²³⁸⁰

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لَا يَكْفُونُ عَنْ وُجُوهِهِمُ
النَّارَ وَلَا عَنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

^a 34 : 30; 36 : 49; 67 : 26.

we have خلقكم من ضعف (30 : 55) which also means that man by nature is very weak. Similarly, the verse خلقته من نار و خلقته من طين means, that Satan by nature is a fire-eater and man is by nature submissive (7 : 13). When the Arabs have to express a prominent natural characteristic of a person they say خلق منه *i.e.* he has been created of it. An Arab would say خلقت من لعب *i.e.* thou hast been created of sport *i.e.* "you love and indulge very much in sport" (Lisān).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers treat the Holy Prophet with contempt because of the delay that has occurred in the Divine punishment overtaking them. They are warned that this delay should not mislead them into believing that they will go scot-free and that they should not reject the Message of Islam in haste and that the time was fast approaching when the prophecies made by the Prophet about the triumph and victory of Islam will be fulfilled and the punishment of God will descend on them swift and hard.

2379. Commentary :

The reference in the words, *when will this promise be fulfilled*, is to the Sign of punishment

referred to in the preceding verse. The disbelievers demanded that they should be punished for their rejection of the Holy Prophet there and then. It is to this impatience of theirs that the verse refers.

2380. Commentary :

The context shows and the wording of the present verse also lends support to the inference that the allusion in the word "fire" is to "the fire of war." The disbelievers ignited that fire and were themselves consumed in it. They were destroyed by the weapon which they employed against the believers. They drew the sword against Islam and by the sword they perished.

The words, *the fire from their faces*, signify the punishment that they will see in front of them *i.e.* the punishment whose signs will be apparent and manifest; and the words "nor from their backs" signify the punishment that will come upon them from behind their backs *i.e.* the punishment which will overtake them suddenly and unawares. Moreover, the punishment will overwhelm all of them—their leaders who are their faces and the ordinary folk who follow them and blindly accept their lead.

41. Nay, "it will come upon them unawares so that it will utterly confound them; and they will not be able to repel it, nor will they be given respite."²³⁸¹

42. ^bAnd Messengers have indeed been mocked at before thee, but that ^awhereat they mocked encompassed those of them who scoffed.²³⁸²

43. Say, 'Who can protect you by night and by day from the Gracious God?' Yet ^athey turn away from the remembrance of their Lord.²³⁸³

بَلْ تَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا
وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَى بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ
سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

قُلْ مَنْ يَكْلُؤُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ
بَلْ هُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a36 : 50 ; 67 : 28. ^b6 : 11 ; 13 : 33. ^c11 : 9 ; 46 : 27. ^d18 : 102 ; 21 : 3 ; 26 : 6.

2381. Commentary :

The reference in the verse may be to the Fall of Mecca when the Quraish were taken completely by surprise and were utterly confounded. The Sign of punishment which they demanded came upon them suddenly in the form of the fall of their capital city, the centre of disbelief and idolatry.

2382. Commentary :

The verse makes mention of two things which never fail to occur when a Prophet preaches his Message: (a) the Message is held up to scorn and the Prophet himself is mocked and jeered at; and (b) the jeering and mocking of the scoffers always recoils on their own heads and they themselves become the laughing-stock of the world.

2383. Important Words :

يَكْلُؤُكُمْ (can protect you) is derived from 'كَلَا' (kala'a). They say كَلَانَا الله i.e. God guarded such a one or kept him safe. The Arabs say اذهبوا في كَلَاةِ الله i.e. go ye in the safe keeping of God. الْقَوْمُ كَلَانًا means, he acted as a scout for

the party. كَلَا الدِّين means, the payment of the debt was postponed or delayed (Lane & Aqrab).

The expression مِنَ الرَّحْمَانِ may mean: (a) against or from the Gracious God. The verse means, who can save you from the punishment of the Gracious God : or (b) the expression may mean, instead of the Gracious God i.e. who can save you instead of God if He does not save you.

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that there are many calamities, catastrophes, diseases and afflictions that take their birth at night and there are others that are born in the daytime. Man is completely unaware of what misfortunes hang over his head. It is the Gracious God Who protects him from them and yet the ungrateful people deny and reject the Divine teachings that are sent down for their spiritual regeneration.

The clause "yet they turn away from the remembrance of God," signifies that when disbelievers are told that God has made every provision for their physical needs, they readily admit it. But when they are told that He has made

44. Have they any gods that can protect them beside Us? They cannot help themselves, nor can they be befriended by any one against Us.²³⁸⁴

أَمْ لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ تَسْعُهُمْ مِنْ دُونِنَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
نَصْرَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ مِتَّا يُصْحَبُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. Nay, "We provided those and their fathers with the good things of this world till life grew long for them. Do they not see that We are visiting the land, reducing it from its outlying borders? Can they even then be victors?²³⁸⁵

بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هَؤُلَاءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْعُمُرُ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا
مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا أَفَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a 57 : 17. ^b 13 : 42.

similar provision for their spiritual needs they turn aside with disdain and refuse to admit that such a thing can happen.

Spiritually speaking the verse implies that whenever a spiritual sun or moon makes its appearance, calamities and miseries overtake men to establish the truth of the claim of the Divine Reformer because it is rejected and the Reformer himself is persecuted.

2384. Important Words :

يُصْحَبُونَ (be befriended) is derived from صحب. They say صحبه i.e. he lived with him; he was or became his companion, friend etc. أصحب الرجل means, he protected or guarded the man. الله يصببك means, may God protect you (Tāj & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Besides its general sense the allusion of the verse may be to the fall of Mecca when the Ka'ba was cleared of the 360 idols which were kept in it. The verse purports to say that when those idols could not protect themselves from the terrible fate that was meted out to them, how could they help their votaries? Abū Sufyān, the Quraishite chief, when asked by the Holy

Prophet on the day of the fall of Mecca whether he had not yet realized that there was no god but the One Almighty God, replied, "Had there been any other gods beside God, verily they had been of some avail to us" (Muir's Life of Muḥammad, 1923 edition, p. 404).

2385. Commentary :

The verse gives the reason why disbelievers go astray and what leads them to forget and forsake the truth. It is this that when the time of the national prosperity of a people becomes prolonged, they come to labour under the misconception that their prosperity and progress will never see decline or decay and consequently they become arrogant and their hearts are hardened and they reject the Message of their Prophet. Thus prolongation of the period of the prosperity of a people becomes the cause of their downfall. The verse warns disbelievers against wishful thinking and false complacency that their progress and prosperity will continue indefinitely and tells them not to shut their eyes to the patent fact that God is gradually but surely reducing and curtailing the land from all its sides i.e. Islam is making inroads into every

46. Say, 'I warn you not but according to *Divine* revelation.' But "the deaf cannot hear the call when they are warned."²³⁸⁶

47. ^bAnd if *even* a breath of thy Lord's punishment touch them, they will surely cry out, 'Woe to us! we were indeed wrongdoers.'²³⁸⁷

48. And We shall set up *accurate* scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so that 'no soul will be wronged in aught. And even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We would bring it forth. And sufficient are We as reckoners.'²³⁸⁸

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُنذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ

الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَيْنَ مَسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ

يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ

نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خُرْدٍ

أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكُفَىٰ بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

° 30 : 53. ° 7 : 6. ° 4 : 41; 18 : 50.

home and all sections and strata of their society. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate are daily joining its fold. It asks : "Does not this fact alone constitute an irrefutable proof of the truth of Islam? And in view of the sure signs of their decline and fall do they still entertain the false hope that they will continue to enjoy peace, prosperity and progress and will be able to arrest or retard the progress of Islam?" See also 13 : 42.

2386. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that the prophecies which the Holy Prophet has made about the triumph of Islam and about the defeat and discomfiture of disbelief are not the figment of his own imagination. They proceed from the Almighty God and are based on His clear and express Word.

2387. **Important Words :**

نفحة (breath) is inf. noun from نفح which means, it diffused its odour. نفحت الريح means, the wind blew or it blew gently. نفحه means, he gave him a gift. نفحه means, an odour or a

plenteous odour ; a blast or a breath of wind ; a gift. نفحة من السموم means, a grievous blast of hot wind (Lane & Aqrab).

2388. **Important Words :**

خردل الطعام means, grain of mustard seed. (khardala) means, he ate the best part of the food. خردل اللحم means, he cut the meat into small pieces (Aqrab).

Commentary :

Besides being a continuation of the subject dealt with in the preceding verses the present verse makes it clear that Hell is not everlasting. If even the slightest good work done by a man is to be rewarded, as the verse says, then a time must come when the punishment of his evil deeds should come to an end and the reward of his good works should begin. Contrary to the teachings of other religions the Qur'ān teaches us that it is the Heaven and not Hell that is everlasting. The Islamic conception of Heaven and Hell is evidently more in keeping with reason and common sense. See also (11 : 109).

49. ^aAnd We gave Moses and Aaron the Discrimination and a Light and a Reminder for the righteous,²³⁸⁹

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً
وَذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝٤٩

50. ^bThose who fear their Lord in secret, and who dread the Hour of Judgment.²³⁹⁰

الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ
مُشْفِقُونَ ۝٥٠

51. And this is a blessed Reminder that We have sent down; will you then reject it?²³⁹¹

وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبَارَكٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنْتُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ۝٥١

a 2 : 54. b 67 : 13.

2389. Commentary :

الفرقان (the Discrimination) may signify the Signs and miracles which God gave to Moses, and ضياء (Light) the arguments which proved the truth of his mission and ذكر (Remembrance) may signify the teaching itself.

The Torah has been called the Discrimination, a Light and a Remembrance. It was الفرقان (Discrimination) because in its own time it differentiated and discriminated between truth and falsehood. It was ضياء (Light) in the sense that in its pristine purity it dispelled spiritual darkness and it was ذكر (Remembrance) as by acting upon its teaching the Israelites acquired great fame and eminence (ذكر meaning good reputation ; eminence etc.).

2390. Commentary :

The expression بالغيب (in secret) may signify that the righteous servants of God fear Him while He is hidden from their eyes or when they are themselves hidden from the eyes of the people.

2391. Important Words :

مبارك (blessed) is past part. from بارك which

is again derived from برک which means, he or it was or became firm, steady; continued or stayed in a place; it (the night) was or became long or protracted. بارك عليه means he kept or applied himself constantly or perseveringly to it. اللهم means, O God ! continue or perpetuate Thou to Muhammad the honour and eminence which Thou hast given him. بارك الله means, may God bless thee continuously. بارك الله means, God is abundant in good or He exceeds every thing and He is exalted above all things. ابتكرت السماء means, the sky rained continually or incessantly or vehemently. بركة (birkatun) means, a pool; a pond ; a place where water remains and collects. باركة (barakatun) means, good; increase; abundance; abundant in continual good (Lane). See also 6 : 93.

Commentary :

In view of the different meanings of the root-word برک the word مبارك possesses the sense of firmness, steadiness, continuity, abundance of good, exaltation and collection, etc. It is an epithet exclusively enjoyed by the Qur'ān (6 : 93). No other Divine Scripture has been given this title. Even in other titles which the Qur'ān

- 5 52. And before *this* We gave Abraham his guidance and We knew him well.²³⁹²

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا

بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. "When he said to his father and his people, 'What are these images to which you are so devoted?'^{2392A}

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي

أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاقِبُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. ^bThey replied, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.'

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. He said, "Indeed, you yourselves as well as your fathers have been in manifest error."

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

^a 6 : 75; 19 : 43; 26 : 71.

^b 26 : 75 ; 43 : 24.

^c 60 : 5.

possesses in common with other Divine Scriptures it exceeds them in degree, but *Mubāarak* is its exclusive title and in this title lies its outstanding distinction. Being *Mubāarak* the Qur'ān combines in itself all kinds of excellences. It is full of blessings which will continue to be bestowed upon its followers and which never decrease or diminish. There is no good which it does not possess in abundance and in which it does not excel other holy Scriptures. Mankind will continue to benefit from its teaching till the end of time. This is not the case with other Scriptures. They are defunct. All life has departed from them. The very languages in which they were revealed are dead. But the Qur'ān is a living Book. It shall live so long as mankind lasts and will continue to give light to a world groping in darkness.

2392. Commentary :

رُشْدَهُ (his guidance) means, the guidance which befitted his station as a great Prophet of God. The clause, "We knew him well" means, "We were fully conversant with his excellent inborn

qualities *i. e.* We knew his real worth or We knew that he was eminently fitted to be entrusted with the great and noble duties of a Prophet."

2392 A. Important Words :

تَمَائِيل (images) is the plural of تَمَال which means, an image (Aqrab). See also 2 : 18 ; 2 : 107 ; 6 : 39; 13 : 7 & 14 : 46.

The particle مَا (what) here denotes contempt and derision and not a question.

Commentary :

Everyone has his own style of speech. Abraham too had his peculiar way of talking. While talking to idol-worshippers he generally made use of irony. In the present verse he appears to be asking a question while in reality he is speaking contemptuously of the gods of his people. This special style of Abraham is also apparent from 6 : 77, 78, 79. In the present verse he seems to say to his people : "How useless and futile these images are which you worship!" While Abraham used to talk in ironical language, Jesus would talk in metaphors. Several of his sayings quoted in the Qur'ān have

56. They said, 'Is it *really* the truth that thou hast brought us, or art thou one of those who jest ?' ²³⁹³

57. He replied, 'Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who made them; and I am one of those who bear witness to that.' ²³⁹⁴

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِبِينَ ۝

قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ ۖ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۝

been misunderstood because they have been taken literally.

In the expression لها (lit. to which) the letter ل is used to denote respect and reverence and also to express emphasis. The word عكف is not generally followed by ل. We say عكف في المكان i.e. he stayed in the place. عكف على الأمر means, he stuck to the affair (Aqrab).

The word أب besides meaning 'father' also means paternal uncle. The person mentioned in the above verse was Abraham's uncle and not his father who is said to have died before Abraham was invested with the Divine mission of a Prophet. See also 6 : 75.

The verse points to a very close resemblance between Abraham and the Holy Prophet. The fathers of both had died before they were made Prophets. Both were brought up by their uncles. Both preached the Message of Unity of God to their uncles. Both the uncles refused to accept the Divine Message with this difference that whereas Abraham's uncle opposed and persecuted him, Abū Ṭālib, the Holy Prophet's uncle, though he did not accept his Message, stood by him through thick and thin to the last moment of his life and even suffered for him.

2393. Commentary :

The people of Abraham were such confirmed idolaters that when they saw Abraham preach-

ing against idol-worship they did not at first believe that he was serious and earnest about his preaching. In this verse they have been depicted as asking him whether he was really convinced of the truth of his mission or whether he was only joking and jesting with them.

2394. Commentary :

The verse points to the supreme truth that Divine Messengers, when they talk about God, speak from personal experience. They do not merely make an assertion about God but substantiate it with practical proofs from their own life. They do not invite people to God merely because human reason demands belief in His existence but they do it with full conviction and firm faith. When they say that God exists they say it with full conviction because they constantly hear His sweet voice and because also they themselves speak to Him and receive answer to their prayers from Him. God reveals Himself to them and they witness practical proofs of His power and omniscience in their own persons. So their testimony about the existence of God is based not on hearsay, nor on reason alone but primarily and principally on their personal experience. It is for this reason that God has commanded the Holy Prophet to declare :

I call unto Allah on sure knowledge, I and those who follow me (12 : 109).

58. 'And, by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away *and* turned your backs.'²³⁹⁵

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِأَعْيُنِهِمْ أَنْ تَنْصَرُوا لِلَّهِ لَا كُفَيْدَاتٍ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُولُوا

مُذِيرِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. "So he broke them into pieces, *all* except the chief of them, that they might return to it *for enquiry*."²³⁹⁶

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. They said, 'Who has done this to our gods? Surely, he must be a wrongdoer.'²³⁹⁷

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِإِلَهِنَا إِنَّهُ لَبِئْسَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. They said, 'We heard a young man speak *ill* of them; he is called Abraham.'^{2397A}

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾

a 37 : 94.

2395. Commentary :

Probably Abraham had spoken these words to himself or they give verbal expression to the plan which he had contrived in his mind practically to demonstrate the folly and falsity of the polytheistic beliefs and practices of his people.

was a very effective and forcible way of bringing home to the idolaters the futility of worshipping mere lifeless blocks of wood or stone.

2396. Important Words :

جُذَاذًا (pieces) is inf. noun from جَذَّ . They say, جَذَّهُ *i.e.* he cut it and broke it into pieces. جَذَّ فِي سَبِيلِهِ means, he walked quickly (Lane).

If the pronoun • be taken to refer to God, then the meaning would be that Abraham broke the idols of his people so that when they should see them broken into pieces they should realize their complete powerlessness and uselessness and so turn to God.

Commentary :

The pronoun • in the expression إِلَيْهِ may refer either to God, or to the chief idol or to Abraham himself. As referring to Abraham, the meaning of the verse would be that he broke all the idols except the chief among them so that his people should have recourse to him to ask him who had broken their idols and that when they should come to him he should tell them that instead of inquiring from him they should put the same question to their chief idol. This

It may be noted here that the idols belonged to Abraham's own family. Otherwise it was not right and proper for him to break other people's idols.

2397. Commentary :

The clause مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا may mean:

- (a) Who has done this?
- (b) Whosoever has done this.

2397 A. Important Words :

يَذْكُرُهُمْ (speak ill of them). ذَكَرَهُ means, (1) he mentioned it, told it, related it; (2) he spoke well of him or he spoke ill of him and mentioned his faults. They say لَتَذْكُرَنِي لَتَذْكُرَنِي *i. e.* if thou

62. They said, 'Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness.'²³⁹⁸

63. Then they said to Abraham, 'Is it thou who hast done this to our gods, O Abraham?'

64. He replied, 'Well, somebody has surely done this. Here is the chief of them. So ask it and them if they can speak.'²³⁹⁹

قَالُوا فَأْتُوا بِهِ عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

قَالُوا أَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتَانِ يَا بَرِّهِيمُ ﴿٦٣﴾

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ

كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

speak ill of me, thou wilt assuredly repent. An Arab poet says :

لا تذكري فرسي وما أطعمته
فيكون جلدك مثل جلد الأجر

i.e. do not thou speak ill of my horse and of what I have given him for food or thy skin will be like the skin of the scabby (Lane & Aqrab).

2398. Commentary :

The reason why Abraham was summoned to appear in public was either that those who had heard him speak ill of the idols should bear witness against him that he had broken the idols, or that after listening to the evidence against Abraham they might decide what punishment should be meted out to him. Or the reason might be that all people should witness the punishment that was to be inflicted on him. This is the significance of the words "that they may bear witness."

2399. Important Words :

بل is a particle of digression. Sometimes its meaning is either the cancellation of what precedes as in بل عباد مكرمون i.e. nay (or nay rather or nay but), they are honoured servants (21 : 27) ; or transition from one object of discourse to another as in بل تؤثرون الحياة الدنيا i.e. but you prefer the present life (87 : 17). Sometimes

it is also used to denote the passing from one subject to another without cancelling what precedes it and is syn. with و (and), as in بل هو i.e. And it is a glorious Qur'ān. Thus بل means, but; and; surely or verily (Lane). Here it is used in the sense of إن (surely).

Commentary :

If the expression بل فعله كبيرهم هذا is rendered as "somebody has surely done this," a stop will have to be placed after فعله and the words بل فعله كبيرهم will be treated as an independent sentence meaning, "here is the chief" of them. This is the meaning we have adopted in the text and this seems to be the more correct meaning. Or the words بل فعله كبيرهم هذا may have been spoken ironically or by way of mockery by Abraham as was his wont while talking to his idolatrous people. In that case the sense of the words would be something like this: "Why should have I done this, this their chief may have done this," meaning thereby that "the fact is too evident to warrant any questioning or to need any explanation that I have done this, i.e. I have broken the idols. If I had not done this, could this lifeless block of stone have done this?" In this verse Abraham seems to have rebuked his people for their idolatrous practices and brought home to them the futility

65. Then they turned towards one another and said, 'You yourselves are surely in the wrong.'

66. And they were made to hang down their heads *for shame and they said*, 'Certainly thou knowest well that these do not speak.'²⁴⁰⁰

67. He said, "Do you then worship, instead of Allah, that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you?"

68. 'Fie on you and on that which you worship instead of Allah! Will you not then understand?'²⁴⁰¹

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

ثُمَّ نَكَّسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ
يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٧﴾

أَفِ تَكْمٌ وَلِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

^a 29 : 18; 37 : 96.

of those practices, first by breaking the idols and then by challenging their votaries to ask those idols to tell them who had broken them.

The verse by implication points to one of the most important Divine attributes. Abraham confounded his idolatrous people by first breaking the idols and then by inferring therefrom that an idol which could not save itself from harm and which could not even answer the call of its worshippers was but a lifeless thing, fit to be thrown on the scrap-heap, and that his Lord was the Ever-living God Who answered and accepted the prayers of His servants. See also 20 : 90.

2400. Important Words :

نكسوا على رؤوسهم (their heads were made to hang low for shame). نكسوا is derived from نكس. They say نكسه or نكسه (nakkasahū) i.e. he turned it over or upside down ; changed its manner of being or state; he turned it over upon

its head. نكس رأسه means, he bent or lowered or hung down his head towards the ground for shame or by reason of abasement. نكس المريض means, illness returned or reverted to the sick man. نكس الرجل means, the man became weak and powerless (Lane, Aqrab & Ma'ānī). Thus the Quranic expression نكسوا على رؤوسهم would mean, (a) they returned to their former state of disbelief, or wicked behaviour ; (b) they reverted to disputation after they had taken the right course; (c) they hung down their heads in shame and were completely dumb-founded, or their heads were made to hang low for shame.

2401. Important Words :

For أف (fie) see 17 : 24.

Commentary :

Abraham denounced the false beliefs of his idolatrous people with a courage and boldness which is the special characteristic of God's Prophets.

69. ^aThey said, 'Burn him and help your gods, if *at all* you *mean* to do anything.'²⁴⁰²

70. We said, 'O fire, be thou cool and a *means* of safety for Abraham!'²⁴⁰³

71. ^bAnd they had sought to do evil to him, but We made them the worst losers.

قَالُوا احْرَقُوهُ وَاَنْصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فاعِلِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

قُلْنَا يَنْتَارُكُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٧٠﴾

وَاَرَادُوا بِهٖ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ الْاَخْسَرِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾

^a 29 : 25; 37 : 98. ^b 37 : 99.

'Abraham', says Dr. F. M. T. Bohl, D.D., Ph.D. in Enc. Brit. 'is no leader of a Bedouin tribe seeking plunder and conquest; his significance lies rather in the field of religion. He is not, in the first instance, the progenitor of a people but the founder and leader of a religious movement. Like Muḥammad many centuries later, he stood at the head of a great movement among the Semitic peoples and tribes... While Abraham's forefathers served other gods (Josh. 24 : 2), 'the God who redeemed Abraham was the same as the God of Moses and Elija'. See also 6 : 75.

2402. Commentary :

Being unable to refute Abraham's argument, no course was left open to his idolatrous people but to have recourse to persecuting and tormenting him and if possible to killing or burning him to death—indeed a very clear but mean confession of their discomfiture and defeat at Abraham's hands. Similarly did the opponents of the Holy Prophet plot against him. The Qur'ān says : *And remember the time when the disbelievers plotted against thee that they might imprison thee or kill thee or expel thee* (8 : 31).

Besides the verse under comment, at two other places in the Qur'ān the plot against Abraham has been mentioned. In 29 : 25 we have :

And the answer of his people was only that they said, 'slay him or burn him' and in 37 : 98 it is stated: they said, 'Build for him a structure and cast him into the fire.'

2403. Commentary :

In 29 : 25 we are told that Abraham's enemies sought to slay or burn him but God saved him from the fire, and in 37 : 98, 99 we read that Abraham's enemies designed to build a structure for him and cast him into the fire but they failed in their evil design. The present verse however says, "O fire, be thou cool and a means of safety for Abraham." How the fire became cool we are not told. Timely rain or a stormy hurricane might have extinguished it. In any event God did bring about circumstances which led to Abraham's deliverance. There is always an element of mystery in heavenly miracles and Abraham's having been saved from the fire was indeed a great miracle.

This incident of Abraham's having been cast into the fire is credited not only by the Jews but also by the Eastern Christians; the 25th of the second Canun, or January, being set apart in the Syrian Calendar for the commemoration of Abraham's being cast into the fire. (Hyde, *De Rel. Vet Pers.*, p. 73). See also Mdr. Rabbah on Gen. Par. 17 ; Schalacheleth Haka-bala, 2 ; Maimon de Idol. Ch. 1 ; and Jad

72. And We delivered him and Lot and brought them to the land which We had blessed for the peoples.²⁴⁰⁴

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا
لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. "And We bestowed upon him Isaac, and as a grandson, Jacob, and We made all of them righteous.²⁴⁰⁵

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً مَوْكَلًّا
جَعَلْنَا صُلْحِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. ^bAnd We made them leaders who guided *people* by Our command, and We sent revelation to them *enjoining* the doing of good works, and the observance of Prayer, and the giving of alms. And Us *alone* they worshipped.²⁴⁰⁶

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ آيَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْهِمْ فَعَلِ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ
الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَبِيدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

^a 11 : 72; 19 : 50; 29 : 28; 37 : 113; 51 : 29. ^b 2 : 125; 32 : 25.

Hachazakah, Vet, 6, who makes Abraham, in his 40th year, renounce star-worship, break images, escape the wrath of the king by a miracle, and preach that there is one God of the whole universe.

2404. Commentary :

By the words, *the land which We blessed for the peoples*, is meant Canaan to which country the great Patriarch emigrated with his nephew, Lot.

Abraham journeyed from Ur (Mesopotamia) to Harran and from there, by God's command, to Canaan, which God had decreed to give to his posterity. This journey had a precise objective and aim. In pursuance of Divine plan and design all the great Prophets or their followers, at one time or another, have to emigrate from their homes. Abraham accompanied by Lot emigrated from Mesopotamia to Canaan; Moses had to flee with his people from Egypt to the Promised Land; Jesus had to quit Palestine after his escape from the Cross and journeyed

to the East in search of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and last of all the Holy Prophet had to emigrate from his native city, Mecca, and adopt Medina as his home.

2405. Commentary :

Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham has not been mentioned here. He has been mentioned separately in v. 86 below on account of his being the head of a distinct and more important line.

2406. Commentary :

God chose leaders of religious movements from among the progeny of Abraham in fulfilment of his prayer referred to in 2 : 125. A similar promise in regard to the raising of Divine Reformers in every age from among his followers was made to the Holy Prophet (Abū Dawūd). This promise is also implicit in the famous prayer, *i.e. Darūd*, viz., "O Lord bestow thy blessings upon Muḥammad as Thou didst bestow thy blessings upon Abraham." Divine Reformers continued to appear among the progeny of Abraham till, with the rejection of

75. And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge. ^aAnd We saved him from the city which practised abominations. They were indeed a wicked and rebellious people. ^{2406A}

وَلَوْطًا آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ
الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبِيثَ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ
فَسَقَيْنَ ۝

76. And We admitted him to Our mercy; surely he was *one* of the righteous.

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

١. 6 77. ^bAnd remember Noah when he cried to *Us* aforetime, and We heard his prayer and delivered him and his family from the great distress. ²⁴⁰⁷

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ
وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ۝

^a7 : 84; 27 : 58; 29 : 34. ^b 26 : 118-120; 37 : 76-77; 54 : 11.

Jesus by the Jews, they were deprived of this boon for all time and prophethood was transferred to the House of Ishmael in fulfilment of the above-said prayer. Divine Teachers are now raised from among the followers of the Holy Prophet in every century to regenerate Islam and they will continue to do so till the end of time. The fulfilment of the prayer implicit in *Darūd* establishes the superiority of the Holy Prophet over Abraham because whereas Divine Teachers ceased to appear among the progeny of Abraham after Jesus, they will continue to appear among his followers as long as this world lasts.

2406 A. Commentary :

The most important and prominent of the Signs that God gives to His Prophets in support of their claim is that they are vouchsafed spiritual knowledge and Divine wisdom in a very large measure. This Sign was given to all the Prophets—Lot, Joseph, David, Solomon, Moses and last of all it was granted to the greatest of all the Divine Prophets—the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, in the form of the Qur'ān which is now the only guide for all mankind till the end of time and which is his greatest and standing miracle.

2407. Commentary :

It is worthy of note that this *Sūra* makes a special mention of the trials and tribulations through which almost all the Prophets of God had to pass in their time and of the way in which God helped them and delivered them from their afflictions, the implication being that like those Prophets the Holy Prophet of Islam too will have to suffer hardships and privations and like them he too will come out of his ordeal with flying colours. Particular reference to Noah here signifies that if the Law were a curse as Christians say, then what would they say about Noah who came with a Law and among whose followers a great Prophet like Abraham appeared (37: 84)? It may be said in passing that Prophet Noah was the first Law-bearing Prophet. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said about him *اول نبي شرعت على لسانه الشرائع* i.e. he was the

78. And We helped him against the people who rejected Our Signs. They were surely a wicked people; so "We drowned them all."²⁴⁰⁸

79. And *remember* David and Solomon when they exercised their *respective* judgments concerning the crop, when the sheep of *certain* people strayed therein *by night*; and We were witness to their judgment.²⁴⁰⁹

وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمٌ سَوْءٌ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ
نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحَكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

* 26 : 121; 37 : 83; 54 : 12-13; 71 : 26.

first Prophet to whom the Law was revealed. The Law first began to be revealed to Noah because in his time human mind had attained to such a stage of development as to have been able to understand and comprehend Divine attributes, and the evils which are the inevitable result of a civilized society had also begun to make their appearance in his time.

2408. Commentary :

The words *من القوم* literally meaning "from the people" really mean "against the people", the particle *من* having been used here in the sense of *على* i.e. over; against.

2409. Important Words :

حَرْث (crop) is infinitive noun from *حَرَاثَ* (*hara-tha*) which means, he ploughed or tilled the soil; he sowed seeds or planted plants in it. *حَرْث* means, a tilth or a piece of land ploughed for sowing or land actually sown with some crop; land under crop; crop or produce of land (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 206.

نَفَسَتْ (strayed therein) is derived from *نَفَسَ*. They say *نَفَسَ الْقَطْنُ* i.e. he corded the cotton. *نَفَسَتْ الْغَنَمُ* means, the sheep pastured at night without a shepherd. *نَفَسَ الرَّاعِي الْأَبْلَ* means, the

shepherd left the camel at night that it may pasture (Aqrab).

Commentary :

In order to add to the beauty of expression use has been made of metaphorical language in this and the following few verses. *الحَرْث* in this verse may signify Solomon's country and the words *غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ* may be taken as standing for those wild and predatory neighbouring tribes who raided Solomon's country. The reference is to the policy which David and Solomon adopted to repel and defeat the depredations of these savage tribes. David was a great warrior and as such was in favour of adopting a strong policy. Solomon, however, wished to pursue a milder policy and to win over these tribes by entering into treaties of friendship with them. Taken literally the verse would signify that even very ordinary people had ready access and could submit their cases to these great Prophets of God who were very powerful rulers. See also 6 : 85; 34 : 11-14 & 38 : 18-21.

The verse may also signify that when a nation rises to power and prosperity, ambitious persons, in order to win power and influence, seek to weaken the hands of the constituted authority by creating dissensions and discord. The expression *غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ* i.e. "persons of beastly nature" may refer to such people.

80. We gave Solomon the *right* understanding of the matter and to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge. "And We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God's praises with David. And it is We Who do all such things."²⁴¹⁰

فَفَقَّهْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكَلَّأْتِنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمَا
سَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا
فَاعِلِينَ ۝

^a 34 : 11; 38 : 19-20.

2410. Important Words :

الجبال (the mountains) is the plural of جبل which is derived from جبل على كذا (jabala). كذا means, God created him and adapted him to it. جبل (Jabalun) means, a mountain; a rocky tract; any rocky elevation; the lord or chief of a people; their learned man; a man who does not move from his place. جبال means, mountains, big or learned men ; people living in mountains etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 13 : 32.

الطائر (the birds) means, a bird or birds. طائر which is the singular of الطير means, a bird; an omen; the cause of actions good or bad; actions good or bad and their consequences; natural powers of man; a highly righteous and spiritual man (Lane & Aqrab). As a bird flies high in the air and builds its nest on lofty trees or mountains, therefore a man who soars high in the spiritual firmament is called a طائر in spiritual terminology. See also 3 : 50; 7 : 132 & 17 : 14.

Commentary :

This verse has been very much misunderstood and misinterpreted. The misunderstanding arises from the far-fetched construction placed upon it by some Commentators. There is, however, nothing in the wording of the verse itself to justify the element of mystery introduced into it. A few simple words used metaphorically in order to add elegance and beauty to the diction of the verse have been distorted to render it a veritable riddle. The

words "We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God's praise with David" have been taken literally to mean that the mountains and birds were under David's control and when he sang the praises of God they actually joined with him in singing those praises. They simply mean that big men (الجبال) and highly spiritual men (الطير) glorified God and sang Divine praises along with David. And if according to the verse, the mountains and birds were subjected to David there was nothing extraordinary in the mountains and the birds being subject to his control as at several other places in the Qur'ān not only mountains and birds but all other things in the heavens and the earth—the sun, the moon, the stars, the day and the night, the animals, the birds, the rivers, the seas, the winds, the clouds etc., are stated to have been subjected to man (2 : 165 ; 7 : 55; 22 : 38 & 45 : 13-14). The word الجبال ; in the present verse, as stated under "Important Words" above, signifies also mountainous territory or "people living in the mountains" as the name of a place sometimes stands for its people (12 : 83). Thus the subjection of "the mountains" to David may signify that he conquered and subjugated wild and savage mountain tribes. The Bible also refers to this fact. It says, "And Hiram, King of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons and they built David a house. So all the elders of Israel came to the

81. "And We taught him the making of coats of mail for you, that they might protect you from each other's violence. Will you then be thankful?"²⁴¹¹

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُؤْسٍ لَّكُمْ لَتَحْصِنَكُم مِّنْ
بِأَسْكُمْ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ ﴿٢٤١١﴾

° 34 : 12.

King to Hebron; and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord and they appointed David King over Israel" (II Sam. chap. 5). Thus the words, "We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God's praises with David" have been particularly used about David in the verse because he was a great conqueror and subduer of wild mountain tribes.

Similarly, celebration by birds and mountains of God's praises should also occasion no surprise. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān we read that all things, animate or inanimate, the angels, animals, birds, the heavens and the earth, even the forces of nature, sing the praises of God, only man cannot understand their glorification (13 : 14; 17 : 45 ; 21 : 20-21 ; 24 : 42; 59 : 2; 61 : 2; 62 : 2; & 64 : 2). The glorification of God by these things which is the carrying out by them of the duties assigned to them by God demonstrates that God is perfect and completely free from all flaws, failings and frailties and so is His handiwork.

The word "birds" used in the verse may also signify actual birds. In this sense the reference would be that David made free use of birds for carrying messages in time of war which had been especially trained for this purpose. Or it may signify flocks of birds which followed David's victorious armies and feasted on the dead bodies of his fallen foes. Lastly, the word "birds," may signify men of high determination and great resolve who are ever ready to scale great heights and are not afraid of difficulties and dangers in

the cause of religion. In brief, the verse means to say that men of ordinary spiritual calibre had become highly spiritual and soared very high in the spiritual firmament through the purifying company of David.

The verse may also be rendered as, "We subjected the mountains and the birds to David ; they all celebrated God's praises." This rendering removes much misunderstanding and difficulty.

For a fuller explanation of this and the next three verses see 34 : 11-14 & 38 : 19, 20, 37, 38, 39.

The expression, "We gave Solomon the right understanding of the matter," has been used to show that Solomon's policy of moderation and conciliation was right in the then obtaining circumstances. In this verse the Qur'ān defends Solomon against the charge levelled at him by some Jewish writers of having pursued a weak policy which brought about the downfall of his dynasty after him. The words, however, should not be taken to mean that the strong policy adopted by David in his own time was wrong. Any misunderstanding leading to this inference has been dispelled by the following clause: "And to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge," which makes it quite clear that the policies of both David and Solomon were best in the circumstances and quite suited to the particular occasion.

2411. Commentary :

The reference in the verse is again to the military might of David and to his great skill in

82. "And *We subjected* to Solomon the violent wind. It blew, at his bidding, toward the land which We had blessed. And We have knowledge of all things.²⁴¹²

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

^a 34 : 13; 38 : 37.

making implements of war and coats of mail. David invented and developed various kinds of armours by means of which he made great conquests. In his reign the Israelite Kingdom reached the zenith of its power and dominion. David's time was the golden period in Israelite history. Never did the Israelites rise to such power again, nor did they enjoy such prestige, prosperity and influence as they did during David's rule. The verse does not mean that David was the first person to manufacture coats of mail. It only means that the art of making various kinds of armour had greatly developed and improved under his supervision and direction.

2412. Commentary :

The reference in the words, *the land which We had blessed*, is to Palestine. It appears that the vessels of Solomon plied in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and regular trade was carried on between Palestine and the countries lying round the Persian Gulf and these two seas.

"The commercial activity of Solomon seems to have been extensive. In this respect, he reminds us of the Pharaohs, who appear almost to have monopolized the foreign commerce of Egypt. His imports were on a scale so lavish that he is said to have made silver as common as stones, cedars as sycamores, in Jerusalem. There was an extensive trade in horses (1 Kings X : 27-29).

In partnership with Hiram of Tyre he maintained a fleet of ocean-going ships trading at regular intervals to Mediterranean ports, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks (1 Kings X : 22). In his trading ventures down the Gulf of 'Akaba he was assisted by skilled Tyrian navigators supplied by Hiram (1 Kings IX : 27, 29), his own people never did take kindly to the sea. This passage was evidently misunderstood by the chronicler, who took it to mean that Hiram supplied the ships (2 Chron. 8 : 18); how they were transported is a problem he leaves unexplained. Ophir, the land to which these vessels ventured, is not identified with certainty, but may be S. Arabia. Solomon brought Israel for the first time fully into a current of oriental commerce and civilization, and during his reign Jerusalem, at any rate, was a city of wealth and luxury" (Enc. Brit, 14th edit. under "Solomon"). In Jew. Enc. under "Solomon" we read: "With the phoenicians he united in maritime commerce, sending out a fleet once in three years from Ezion-geber, at the head of the gulf of 'Akaba to Ophir, presumably on the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula. From this distant port, and others on the way, he derived fabulous amounts of gold and tropical products. These revenues gave him almost unlimited means for increasing the glory of his capital city and palaces, and for the perfection of his civil and military organizations."

83. And *We subjected to him* "deep divers who dived for him, and did other work beside that; and it was We Who guarded them."²⁴¹³

84. ^bAnd *remember* Job when he cried to his Lord, *saying*, 'Affliction has touched me, and Thou art the Most Merciful of all who show mercy.'²⁴¹⁴

وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ مَنْ يَغْوُصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ
عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَفِظِينَ ﴿٢٤١٣﴾

وَايْتُوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ
أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٢٤١٤﴾

^a 34 : 13-14; 38 : 38-39. ^b 38 : 42.

In the present verse the adjective used about the wind is "عاصفه" (violent) while in 38 : 37 it is "رخاء" (gentle) which shows that though the wind blew fast, it was gentle and did no damage to Solomon's ships.

The implied reference in the present and the preceding two verses may be to the great military might and economic progress and prosperity which the Muslims were to attain in the heyday of their glory which they achieved during the reigns of the Omayyad and the Abbaside dynasties.

2413. Commentary :

The word شيطان meaning a rebel and recalcitrant person and also one who is expert in anything (2 : 15), the verse means to say that the non-Israelite people whom Solomon subjugated were engaged on several arduous works by his orders. They worked as carpenters, iron-smiths, divers etc., professions which members of a subject race generally adopt when living under a ruling race. The fact that Solomon had subjugated peoples of many communities is evident from I Kings 9 : 20-21 where we read : " And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able

utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day."

In the words " who dived for him " refer to diving in the Persian Gulf for taking out pearls by divers who were employed for that purpose by Solomon.

2414. Commentary :

Job is mentioned in the Bible as having lived in the land of 'Uz. According to some authorities Mesopotamia was his native place. It appears, however, that 'Uz was situated somewhere in the north of Arabia, between Syria and the Gulf of ' Akaba. It is said that Job lived there before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. According to some Jewish writers he lived about 200 years before Moses. According to some other authorities, however, he was a compatriot of Moses, but he was not an Israelite Prophet, having descended from Esau, the elder brother of Israel. Of all the Books of the Old Testament, the Book of Job is unique in this respect that with the exception of the word, Jehovah, which is the Jewish name for God, the whole history of the Mosaic Law and that of the Jews is conspicuous by its absence in that Book. See also 6 : 85.

The story of Job is said to bear a close resemblance with Harish Chander, a Hindu saint and rich man. The language of the Book of Job

85. So We heard his prayer and removed the distress from which he suffered, ^aand We gave him his family and the like thereof with them, as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder for the worshippers.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ
وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرًا

لِلْعَبِيدِ ۝۸۵

86. And *remember* ^bIshmael and Idrīs and Dhu'l-Kifl. ^cAll were of the steadfast. ²⁴¹⁵

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِذْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ

الصَّابِرِينَ ۝۸۶

^a 38 : 44. ^b 6 : 87: 38 : 49. ^c 38 : 49.

which is Hebrew with various Armaisms and with a faint Arabic tinge is the language which was spoken by the Jews between the 9th and 4th centuries B.C. and that is the time (6th century B.C.) when some Israelite tribes after the Great Dispersion were banished to Afghanistan and Kashmir by Nebuchadnezzar and other Babylonian kings. There they came in contact with the Hindus, and studied their history, mythology and folklore. Whether or not the author of the Book of Job while writing this book borrowed from Hindu popular literature it is difficult to say. But Muslim Commentators of the Qur'ān extensively borrowed from the Book of Job, and drawing upon their own imagination added most fantastic and unbelievable details to Job's account in their Commentaries and ended by making the whole account a veritable fairy tale.

The Qur'ān has confined itself to mentioning a few relevant facts about Job in the present and the next verse. It tells us that Job was a holy man of God, that he had to suffer great hardships and privations as a result of which he became separated from his family and followers who subsequently were made to join him, his followers having increased manifold in the meantime.

Job has also been mentioned in vv. 4 : 164; 6 : 85 & 38 : 42 and everywhere he has been mentioned along with the Prophets David and Solomon. This shows that like these two great Prophets he was a man of influence and affluence and like them he had to pass through trials and tribulations which he bore with exemplary patience and fortitude. The courage and fortitude displayed by Job under very severe affliction and distress has become proverbial. See also Jew. Enc., under "Job" and Enc. of Islam under "Aiyūb" and explanatory notes under 6 : 85 & 38 : 42.

2415. Commentary :

For Ishmael see 2 : 128, 130; and for Idrīs 19 : 58.

The identity of Dhu'l-Kifl is wrapped in uncertainty. Muslim Commentators of the Qur'ān identify him with several persons, chiefly with Biblical Prophets. But the Prophet known by this name appears to be Ezekiel who is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs. There seems to exist a close resemblance between the words ذوالکفل and حزقیل (Ezekiel), both in form and meaning, the former word meaning "possessed of an abundant portion" and the latter "God gives strength." Thus the two words seem to possess

an identical significance. Rodwell says that Ezekiel is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs.

According to Karsten Niebuhr, a little town called Kefil which is situated midway between Najaf and Hilla (Babylon) contains the shrine of Ezekiel which is still visited by Jewish pilgrims. He is further of the view that Kifl is the Arabic form of Ezekiel. The Jews too regard Ezekiel as Dhu'l-Kifl (Enc. of Islam under "Dhu'l-Kifl" and Niebuhr's "Travels" ii, 265). See also 38 : 49.

Born probably about 622 B.C. in a priestly family Dhu'l-Kifl had spent the first twenty-five years of his life in Judah. In 592 B.C. at the age of thirty he received the Call and began to preach against idol-worship and the injustice and immorality of his people. In the meantime Babylon had taken the place of Assyria as the dominant power in Western Asia and Judah had acknowledged its overlordship. But Jehoiakim, the King of Judah under the influence of his evil councillors revolted against the authority of Babylon, thus drawing upon himself the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar who successfully besieged Jerusalem in 597 and carried into exile many of her leading citizens, including Ezekiel and Jehoiachin, a king of three months' standing—his father Jehoiakim having meanwhile died. Jehoiachin was succeeded by his uncle, Zedekiah, who for a time remained faithful to Babylon, but foolishly depending upon the support of Egypt he renounced his allegiance to Babylon, an act which Ezekiel bitterly resented and denounced as treachery to Yahweh Himself. The result was that Jerusalem was invested by Nebuchadnezzar, and after a siege of eighteen months was destroyed amid horrors untold. The Temple on which such a passion of love had been lavished was reduced to ashes and the people deported to Babylon (586 B.C.).

Such was the situation which confronted Ezekiel. In 592 B.C. five years before the downfall he had foreseen it and with some detail had predicted it and had warned the Jews of the impending disaster. The first terrific blow by Babylon in 597 B.C. had left the Jews unconvinced of the probability of their imminent political extinction—a probability which to Ezekiel was a certainty as clear as noonday. But as Ezekiel foretold the destruction of the Jews so did he predict their restoration. The picture drawn by him of the salvation in store for his people is as gracious and brilliant as his forecast of their downfall had been stern. His prophecy of the restoration and return to Jerusalem was based upon a vision which he had seen (Ezekiel, ch. 37) and to which a reference is to be found in the Qur'ān also (2 : 260). Ezekiel's Book is full of prophecies. He foretold the destruction and eventual restoration and rehabilitation of the Jews. He also made a prophecy about the great rise of Christian nations of the West and of Communism and a prophecy about the equally great decline and downfall of both (chapters 38 : 39).

But he did not live long to see the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, because he died in captivity in 570 B. C. at the age of 52. From the Book of Ezekiel it appears that he was a great admirer of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. According to him Nebuchadnezzar was justified in taking the severe steps that he took against Egypt, Tyre and the Israelites. The destruction and sack of Jerusalem was the result of the Israelites' own iniquity and wickedness. He, along with the Prophet Jeremiah, was in favour of supporting the Babylonian government and for this support both these Prophets were condemned as traitors by the Jewish priests of the time, just as Jesus was condemned as a traitor

87. And We admitted them to Our mercy. Surely, they were of the righteous.

88. "And remember Dhu'l-Nūn, when he went away in anger, and he thought that We would never cause him distress and he cried out in the midst of his afflictions, saying, 'There is no God but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers.'²⁴¹⁶

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَإِذَا النُّونُ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ
عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ
سُبْحَانَكَ ۖ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

^a 37 : 140-141; 68 : 49. ^b 37 : 144.

for supporting the Roman government in the time of Titus, and the Promised Messiah in our own time was condemned as a traitor and a sycophant for preferring British rule in India to that of the Sikhs. Ezekiel and Daniel are called the Prophets of the Exile (Holy Bible edited by C.I. Scofield and Peak's "Commentary of the Bible").

2416. Important Words :

ظالمين (wrongdoers) is the plural of ظالم which is derived from ظلم which means, he put a thing in the wrong place or in a place not its own; he made one suffer loss; he committed a wrong; it became dark. ظلمه means, he imposed upon him a thing which was beyond his power or ability. ظلمات is plural of ظلمة which means, darkness; error or ignorance; affliction, hardship, distress or danger. ظلم which means transgression or wrong is said to be of three kinds *i.e.* between God and man; between man and man, and between man and his own self. Every one of these three kinds of ظلم constitutes a wrong done to oneself (Lane, Aqrab, Rāghib & Tāj). See also 2 : 18. The word ظلم and its derivatives, as used in five daily Prayers, commonly fall under the third category. Thus when a supplicant uses the word with regard to himself in Prayer, he only means that he has

done something which has brought trouble or distress upon him or which has exposed him to danger; it does not necessarily mean that he has committed a sin. It is in this sense that this word has been used in the verse under comment and it is in this sense that Moses used the expression *انى ظلمت نفسي i.e. I have wronged my soul* (28 : 17).

Commentary :

ذوالنون (Dhu'l-Nūn) literally meaning "the man of the Fish" is the name of the Prophet Jonah or as he is called Yūnus in the Qur'ān (10 : 99). He has also been called صاحب الحوت (Companion of the Fish) in the Qur'ān (68 : 49).

The verse does not specify the cause of Jonah's anger. It must be the obstinate refusal of his people to accept his Message because for a Prophet to become angry with God is inconceivable. The Elect of God do not even speak nor do they act until God commands them to do so (21 : 28). Most of the English translators of the Qur'ān have translated the words لن نقدر عليه as "We had no power over him." Of this rendering the author of the Lisān says: "none will interpret it in this way except one who is ignorant of the Arabic language and the meanings of its words."

89. "So We heard his prayer and delivered him from the distress. And thus do We deliver the believers.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ
نُنَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

90. ^bAnd *remember* Zachariah when he cried to his Lord, *saying*, 'My Lord, leave me not alone and Thou art the Best of inheritors.'^{2416A}

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا
وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

91. So We heard his prayer and bestowed upon him John and cured his wife for him. They used to vie with one another in good works and 'they called on Us in hope and in fear, and they humbled themselves before Us.'²⁴¹⁷

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَاهُ
زَوْجَهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَ
يَدْعُونََنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَشِيعِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. ^aAnd *remember* her who preserved her chastity; so We breathed into her of Our word and We made her and her son a Sign for peoples.'²⁴¹⁸

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا
وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

^a 68 : 50-51. ^b 3 : 39; 19 : 3-7. ^c 32 : 17. ^d 66 : 13.

According to this Lexicon the expression means: 'We will not straiten him' or 'We will not decree against him any distress.' Lane also agrees with Lisān in this respect. The word قدر has also been used in this sense elsewhere in the Qur'ān. See 17 : 31 ; 28 : 83 ; & 65 : 8. For a fuller account of the Prophet Jonah see 10 : 99.

Commentary :

2416A. For a somewhat detailed account of Zachariah see the first 12 verses of 19th Chapter of the Qur'ān.

2417. Commentary :

The verse shows that from a spiritual point of view Zachariah's family was an ideal one.

2418. Commentary :

The verse refutes the calumnious charges that the Jews had levelled against Mary. It also has a general application and may apply to any person who leads a righteous and upright life. In 66 : 13 a certain class of righteous believers are likened to Mary. Everyone of such righteous believers is Mary; and when God breathes into him of His spirit he becomes a 'son of Mary'. It is in this sense that the Promised Messiah has been called 'son of Mary' by the Holy Prophet.

Mary and her son were a Sign in the sense that the fatherless birth of Jesus implied a warning to the Israelites that on account of their corruption and depravity and their persistent rejection

93. "Verily, this is your people—one people; and I am your Lord, so worship Me."²⁴¹⁹

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۖ وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ

فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٩٣﴾

^a23 : 53.

of God's Messengers they were to be deprived of the gift of prophethood for ever. Jesus's unusual birth marked a transitional stage. He had an Israelite mother but not an Israelite father. The next Prophet was not to be from the House of Israel. With him the gift of prophethood, in accordance with the Biblical prophecy (Deut. 18 : 18), was to be transferred from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael. That Prophet was the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. See also Introduction to the 19th Chapter.

2419. Commentary:

In the preceding few verses some Prophets of God and some other righteous persons have been mentioned together. This is no mere coincidence and it has not been done haphazardly. The mentioning together of these Prophets serves a definite purpose and is done deliberately. All of them had one thing in common. They all suffered great hardships and distress in one form or another and displayed the highest and noblest form of patience and endurance under severest trials. First of all Job is mentioned. The tribulations through which he had to pass were perhaps the severest. Besides 21 : 84 above, the Qur'ān describes the affliction of Job and the patience with which he bore it in the following verses:

And remember Our servant Job, when he cried to his Lord, Satan has smitten me with affliction and torment....Indeed We found him patient. An excellent servant was he. Surely he always turned to God (38 : 42-45).

After Job are mentioned Ishmael, Idris and Dhu'l-Kifl. Ishmael was yet a baby when along

with his mother Hagar he was made to live in the arid and bleak valley of Mecca where at that time not a blade of grass grew and not a drop of water was to be found, and he was only a small boy when a most severe trial faced him. His father Abraham saw in a dream that he was slaughtering him. Ishmael evinced complete readiness to give his life in fulfilment of his father's dream. The Prophet Idris had to face a virulent campaign of denunciation and calumny by his people and he suffered all that abuse with great patience. Dhu'l-Kifl or Ezekiel was carried away in captivity when Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, sacked Jerusalem in the 6th century B. C. He passed much of his time in prison. The case of Jonah is well known. He too had to pass through a great ordeal. He remained in the belly of the fish for three consecutive days and when the whale vomited him out it was on a naked tract of land. He put up with his ordeal with becoming fortitude. Zachariah had reached an extreme old age. His wife was barren and he had no son. The grief that there would be no one left after him to perpetuate his line and to lead his people to the way of righteousness, as all his heirs were godless men, consumed him and in the intensity of grief he prayed to God to bless him with a son. Mary gave birth to Jesus without the agency of husband and on that account she was subjected to abuse and calumny of the most wicked and vicious type. She bore all this agony with a patience that befitted a really godly woman. So it appears that all the above-mentioned Prophets and righteous servants of God bore a striking resemblance to one another in this one respect that

94. "But they have become divided among themselves in their affair; and all will return to Us.²⁴²⁰

وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ إِلَيْنَا رُجُوعٌ ۝٩٤

7 95. So ^bWhoever does good works and is a believer, his effort will not be disregarded and We shall surely record it.²⁴²¹

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ ۝٩٥

96. "And it is an inviolable law for a township which We have destroyed that they shall not return.²⁴²²

وَحَرْمٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ۝٩٦

^a 23 : 54. ^b 4 : 125; 10 : 10; 16 : 98; 20 : 113. ^c 23 : 100-101; 36 : 32.

they all had to face great trials and hardships and like the beloved ones of God all bore them with a brave and resigned heart and a smiling face.

2420. **Commentary :**

One class of people—the righteous servants of God has been mentioned in the preceding few verses. The present verse refers to another class—those who always reject God's Prophets with the result that they fall victim to differences and disagreements among themselves and come to hold mutually antagonistic beliefs and doctrines.

2421. **Important Words :**

كفران (disregard) is noun-infinitive from كفر. They say كفر بنعمة الله i.e. he disregarded the favour of God with ingratitude and forgot it. كفر بكذا is contrary to شكر (gratitude). كفران means, he declared that he had absolutely no connection with such a one (Aqrab). See also 2 : 7, 29.

Commentary :

The previous verse dealt with the rejectors of truth; this one deals with the believers.

2422. **Important Words :**

حرام (inviolable law) is inf. noun from حرم. They say حرم عليه i.e. it was or became forbidden

or unlawful to him. It (a place or a right or a function) or he was or became sacred or inviolable or entitled to respect or honour. حرام means, forbidden or prohibited or unlawful; sacred or inviolable (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 145.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that it is an inviolable Divine law that the dead are never sent back to this world. Those who pass away from this world pass away for ever (23 : 100, 101; 39 : 43). This meaning of the verse is supported by a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet according to which a Companion of his named 'Abdullah was slain in a battle. The Prophet told Abdullah's son, Jābir, that he had seen in a dream that God was so pleased with his father that He had asked 'Abdullah what thing he would love to have so that the same might be given to him, and 'Abdullah replied that he wished to be sent back to the world so that he might fight and be slain again in the cause of truth, to which the Almighty God said : "This cannot be because the word has gone forth from Me that the dead shall not return to the world" (Mājah & Nasa'i).

97. *It shall be so even when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every height and from the top of every wave.*²⁴²³

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ
حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

^a 18 : 95.

2423. Important Words :

حتى (even) is a particle used in several senses. It denotes the end of an extent meaning till, until or to the time of. It is also a conjunction like *واو* signifying, "and" or rather "even". It is also used as an inceptive article. They say *أَكَلْتُ السمكَ حتى رأسها* ; the word *رأس* having three readings. According to the first reading it has a *kasra* (*ra'sihā*), according to the second *fatha* (*ra'sahā*) and according to the third *zamma* (*ra'sohā*). The sentence according to these readings respectively means : (1) I ate the fish even to its head; (2) I ate the fish even (and) its head; (3) I ate the fish so that its head was eaten. The particle also denotes a cause or motive signifying, to the end that, or in order that, or so that, as in the saying *أسلم حتى الجنة* i.e. be a Muslim so that thou mayest enter Paradise. It is also used in the sense of *إلا* i.e. except (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

يأجوج و مأجوج (Gog and Magog) are both derived from *أج* (*ajja*). They say *أَجَّتْ النار* i.e. the fire burned or burned fiercely. *أَج* (*ajja*) means, he hastened or was quick in his pace; he or it became the flaming fire (Lane & Aqrab). The words *يأجوج* and *مأجوج* are both derived from this root. They refer to the Scythians of the furthest East...or as some say, all nations inhabiting the north of Asia and of Europe (see Enc. Brit. and Jewish Encyclopaedia under "Gog" and "Magog", and "Historians' History of the World" vol. 2, p. 582 and Ezekiel 38 : 2-6 &

39 : 6). The words may also apply to the Christian nations of the West as they have made much use of the burning fire and boiling water and because all their material progress and great discoveries and inventions are due to the proper use of these things. Or the words may imply the restlessness of these nations as they are always on the look out restlessly and impatiently to make new conquests. See also 16 : 18.

حَدَب (height) is inf. noun from *حَدَب* (*hadiba*) which means, it rose high or grew up high. *حَدَب* (*hadabun*) means, high or elevated ground. *حَدَب من الارض* means, rugged or high ground. The word also means a wave; a slope in a declivity. *حَدَب الماء* means, the elevated waves of water or the rolling water in waves. The Quranic expression *من كل حدب ينسلون* means, they will occupy every point of vantage and will dominate the whole world and excel all nations (Lane & Aqrab).

ينسلون (shall hasten forth) is formed from *نسل*. They say *نسل الرجل* i.e. he begot a son. *نسل الرجل* means, his progeny multiplied. *نسل في مشيه* means, he hastened in his walk (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

فُتِحَتْ (let loose) signifies that the Christian nations of the West will spread all over the world and dominate it.

Commentary :

The description of Gog and Magog as given in the Bible leaves no doubt about the fact that it

applies to some Christian Powers of the West: Firstly, because they are represented as very numerous and powerful and mighty and their numbers as further swelling by their allies. Says the Bible:

Thou shalt ascend, and come like a storm,
Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land,
thou, and all thy bands and many people
with thee (Ezek. 38 : 9). Gog and Magog...
the number of whom is as the sand of the sea
(Rev. 20 : 8). Every feathered fowl; and
every beast of the field is thus addressed,
ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and
drink the blood of the princes of the earth
(Ezek. 39 : 18, 19).

Secondly, they are shown coming forth from the northern parts of the earth, and from the isles: "And thou (O Gog) shalt come from thy place out of the north, thou, and many people with thee" (Ezek. 38 : 15). Thirdly, they will spread all over the world: "They went up on the breadth of the earth" (Rev. 20 : 9). Fourthly, from their home in the north, they will migrate to other lands and settle in all the four corners of the earth and in time of war they will gather together from their distant colonies: "Satan... shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle" (Rev. 20 : 8). Fifthly, the very root meaning of the words 'Gog' and 'Magog,' as shown under "Important Words," points to Western Christian nations as the nations referred to in the above Biblical prophecies.

The name Gog first occurs in 1 Chr. 5 : 4, where he is mentioned as a descendant of Joel. But Ezek. 38 : 3, and 39 : 1, speak of Gog as 'prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal', evidently Rosh standing for Russia, Meshech for Moscow and Tubal for Tobolsk. Gog is also spoken of as 'of the land of Magog' (Ezek.

38 : 2) and Magog, in this verse of the Bible, according to the commentators of the Bible represents the regions which of old went by the name of Scythia (including Russia and Tартary), from which in the past issued many hordes of barbarians. As Russia was included in the land of Magog, Rosh, Meshech and Tubal must be taken as standing for Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk.

Magog was the second of Japheth's sons (Gen. 10 : 2) and his descendants seem to have given their name to the land referred to in Ezek. 38 : 2. But Magog has also been spoken of as the name of a people in Ezek. 39 : 6 and in Rev. 20 : 8. In the former, Magog has been mentioned along with those 'that dwell carelessly in the isles.' These passages also show that Gog and Magog represent some of the great Powers of Europe, including Russia.

Gog and Magog have also been mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān (18 : 95). There they have been spoken of as making raids into territories on the northern border of Iran, which means that they were the tribes generally known as Scythians. It is a known historical fact that in olden times the Scythians continued to move in large bodies from Asia into Europe, their route lying north of the Caucasus. (Enc. Brit. vol. 12, p. 263. 14th edit.). As one horde settled down in Europe new hordes came forth from the East, pushing their predecessors further and further West. Thus the nations of Europe have been legitimately called Gog and Magog in the Biblical prophecy. It is curious that the memory of two heroes named Gog and Magog is preserved to this day in Guild Hall (London) in the form of two statues. The original effigies which were destroyed in the Great Fire in the sixteenth century are known to have existed in the time of

Henry V. These heroes seem to have been connected with Britain from very ancient times.

Again, from "Ezekiel" and "Revelation" it appears that Gog ad Magog will make their appearance in the Latter Days *i.e.* in the time just before the Second Coming of the Messiah: "After many years thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword" (Ezek. 38 : 8). "It shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land" (Ezek. 38 : 16). See also Rev. 20 : 7-10. These verses show that the prophecy refers to a people who were to have appeared in the distant future. That distant future is the time through which we are now passing and the mighty people of whom the prophecy speaks are the great Christian Powers of the West. The following prophecy in Ezekiel shows that the age in which Gog and Magog were to make their appearance was to be marked by wars, earthquakes, pestilences and terrible catastrophes:

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, (by Israel is here meant the true Israel—the followers of Islam) saith the Lord God, that my future shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel. So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the fields, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God : every man's sword shall be against his brother (And on that day We shall leave some of them to surge against

others—Qur'ān, 18 : 100). And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and satisfy myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (38 : 18-23). See also 18 : 84, 100 & 102.

The present verse when read in conjunction with its predecessor purports to say that the law of nature works in this way that once a people after the hey-day of their grandeur and glory, fall a victim to death and destruction they never regain their lost glory. But it further says that a new phenomenon will take place in the time of Gog and Magog. After their power and might will have gone to pieces and their glory departed the followers of Islam will again come into their own and regain their former greatness, grandeur and glory after they had lost all hope of regeneration. Gog and Magog or the Christian nations of the West have now scaled all the heights of political power and have spread over the whole world which has become divided into two opposite armed camps, *viz.*, Western democracies and their allies on one side and Communism and its satellites on the other. One part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, the other part about the complete and utter destruction of Gog and Magog is awaiting fulfilment. The signs of its fulfilment are already apparent on the horizon.

The verse may also signify that the nations that had been subjugated by Western Christian Powers and had groaned under their cruel exploitation and heartless tyranny will rise to new life again when Christian Powers will begin to deteriorate and fall, after having attained to the highest pinnacles of material glory.

98. And the *fulfilment of God's* true promise draws nigh; then behold, "the eyes of those who disbelieve will fixedly stare *and they will say*, 'Alas for us! we were indeed heedless of this; nay, we were wrongdoers!'"²⁴²⁴

وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ إِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُؤْيِلْنَآ قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا
بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. 'Surely, you and that which you worship beside Allah are the fuel of Hell. ^bTo it shall you *all* come.'²⁴²⁵

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ
أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَرَدُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

100. If these had been gods, they would not have come to it; and all will abide therein.²⁴²⁶

لَوْ كَانَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ آلِهَةً مَا وَرَدُوهُمَْا وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

• 14 : 43. • 19 : 72.

2424. Commentary :

The words, *the fulfilment of true promise draws nigh*, refer to the destruction of the power of Gog and Magog and the triumph of Islam through the Promised Messiah whose advent by the consensus of Muslim scholarly opinion has been foretold in the verse, "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions" (61 : 10). The domination of Gog and Magog will be followed by catastrophic occurrences in the world which eventually will result in the triumph of Islam and the vanquishment of the forces of falsehood and materialism as represented by Gog and Magog.

2425. Important Words :

حصب (fuel) is noun-infinitive from حصب (haṣa-ba). They say حصبه i.e. he threw at him, or pelted him with pebbles. حصب به النار means,

he threw it into the fire. حصب means, stones, pebbles, firewood or firewood prepared for fuel (Lane).

Commentary :

Compare this verse with 18 : 101: "And on that day We shall present Hell, face to face, to the disbelievers."

The words *that which you worship* refer both to the idols which the idolaters worship beside God (2 : 24) and to those persons who allow themselves to be worshipped as God (2 : 167, 168).

2426. Commentary :

The verse means to say that if those who have been made the object of worship had been really worthy of worship and had deserved the veneration in which they were held or which they themselves demanded, they would not have been thrown into Hell.

101. Therein groaning will be their lot and they will not hear therein anything else.²⁴²⁷

102. But ^bas for those for whom the promise of a good reward has already gone forth from Us, these will be removed far from it.²⁴²⁸

103. They will not hear the slightest sound thereof; and they shall abide in that which their souls desire.²⁴²⁹

104. The Great Terror will not grieve them, and ^athe angels will meet them, saying, 'This is your day which you were promised.'

105. Remember the day 'when We shall roll up the heavens like the rolling up of written scrolls by a scribe. ^fAs We began the first creation, so shall We repeat it—a promise binding upon Us; We shall certainly perform it.²⁴³⁰

لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ⑭

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ ⑮

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَيْثُ سَهَاءٌ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ ⑯

لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ⑰

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِ لِلْكِتَابِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ ثَعِيدُهُ وَعَدَّا عَلَيْهَا بِآثَانَا كَتَا فَعِلَيْنَ ⑱

^a 11 : 107; 25 : 13; 67 : 8. ^b 19 : 73; 39 : 62. ^c 41 : 32. ^d 41 : 31.
^e 39 : 68. ^f 20 : 56; 29 : 20; 30 : 12.

2427. Commentary :

The words *وهم فيها لا يسمعون* besides the meaning given in the text may also mean, they will not hear anything that will give solace and comfort to them; and (2) there will be so much crying and shrieking and wailing in Hell that its inmates will not hear each other's voice.

If "the fire of Hell" referred to in the preceding two verses may mean the fire of disgrace and humiliation in this world, then the words "they will not hear" would mean that they (the disbelievers) would not listen to the voice of God's Messengers.

2428. Commentary :

This and the next verse show that the righteous servants of God will be kept far away from Hell, and will not even hear its slightest sound, much less enter it as is generally misunderstood from 19 : 72. This and the following verse explain that much-misunderstood verse of the Qur'ān.

2429. Important Words :

For *حسب* see 19 : 99.

2430. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that at that time the great empires will be rolled up like the rolling up of written scrolls by a scribe i.e. they shall

106. And already have We written in the Book of *David*, after the exhortation, that My righteous servants shall inherit the land.²⁴³¹

107. Herein, surely, is a message for a people who worship *God*.

be destroyed. But taken in a metaphorical sense it may signify that through the Holy Prophet a complete transformation will come about and the old heaven will be rolled up and in its place a new heaven and a new earth will be created. And so it came to pass. The old order died and with the Holy Prophet a new and better order came into being. Never had heaven witnessed such a complete transformation in the lives of a people as it did in the Holy Prophet's time.

The expression نعيده (so shall We repeat it) implies that the order brought into being by the Holy Prophet will receive a set-back through the material outlook on life created by the godless and mechanistic Western civilization. But this set-back will be temporary and a new spiritual awakening will be brought about by the selfless efforts of a Great Follower of the Holy Prophet (the Promised Messiah) and his devoted followers, and Islam will again emerge triumphant. The verse may also mean that at the time to which reference has been made in the preceding verses, great empires will be reduced to ashes and powerful nations will be destroyed and other nations will rise to power in their place.

2431. Commentary :

By الارض (the land) is meant Palestine. It is worthy of note that Christian commentators themselves have interpreted the phrase 'inherit the land' or 'inherit the earth' in the Psalms as

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ
أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾

إِنَّ فِي هَذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

meaning, 'inherit Canaan, the pledge of God's covenant.' ("Commentary on the Old Testament," published by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, notes on Ps. 37 : 3, 9). The reference in the words, "in the Book of David" is to Psalms 37 : 9, 11, 18, 22 & 29, where it is stated :

For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.....But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever...For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut ;.....The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

The word الذكر may also refer to Torah, the Book of Moses. There is a prophecy in Deuteronomy (28 : 11 & 34 : 4) that Palestine was to be given to the Israelites :

For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant....And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed.

The Israelites rose to great power after Moses and in the time of David and Solomon their rule extended far and wide till it embraced in its

orbit far-off lands. Then they fell on evil days. They sinned and transgressed and killed God's Prophets with the result that Divine nemesis overtook them. First Samaria was conquered and ravaged by the Assyrians about 733 B.C. and the whole country north of Israel was annexed by them. Then under Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptians ravaged Judah in 608 B.C. and last of all the greatest blow fell on Israel when Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, laid waste Judah, killed in cold blood the inhabitants of Jerusalem and burned and razed the holy Temple of Solomon to the ground and carried away in captivity the members of the royal family and their Prophets. After wandering in wilderness for about a century the Israelites were restored to Jerusalem and to some of their lost glory through the instrumentality of Cyrus, the Persian King and his successors. To this restoration the following passage of the Bible makes a prophetic reference from the mouth of Moses:

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee—thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.... And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers (Deut. 30 : 1—5).

Again the Israelites relapsed into sin and iniquity. They opposed and persecuted God's Messengers and the cup of their wickedness became full to the brim when they hung on the Cross Jesus, their last great Prophet. Then God's wrath fell upon them. The Roman hordes under

Titus attacked them in 70 A.D. and amid circumstances of unparalleled horror Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple of Solomon was burnt down for the second time (Enc. Bib. & Jew. Enc. under "Jerusalem"). To this double disaster of the Israelites vv. 17 : 5-8 of the Qur'ān make a pointed reference.

Palestine, the Holy Land, remained in the hands of Christians till Muslims conquered it in the Caliphate of 'Umar, the Second Successor of the Holy Prophet, and unlike Nebuchadnezzar and Titus he accorded such benign and kind treatment to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and showed such respect and reverence to the Temple of Solomon as are unparalleled in the whole annals of foreign conquest. It is to this conquest of Palestine by Muslim arms that the prophecy embodied in the verse under comment particularly refers. Palestine remained under Muslim possession for about 1350 years with the exception of a brief space of 92 years when during the Crusades it changed hands, till in our own time through the evil designs of some so-called democratic Christian Powers, the country of the name of Palestine has altogether ceased to exist and on its ruins the State of Israel has been built. The Jews have come to their own after wandering in wilderness for about 2000 years. But this great historical event, too, has taken place in fulfilment of a Quranic prophecy. The Muslims were told that in the time of the Promised Messiah, the Jews will be made to come back to their Holy Land from the ends of the earth (17 : 105). But this is only a temporary phase. The Muslims are destined to win it back. Let the whole world know that sooner or later—sooner rather than later—Palestine will revert to Muslim possession. This is a Divine decree and nobody can alter God's decree.

108. ^aAnd We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.²⁴³²

109. ^bSay, 'Surely it has been revealed to me that your God is but One God. Will you then submit?'²⁴³³

110. But if they turn back, say, 'I have warned you all alike and ^cI know not whether that which you are promised is near or distant.²⁴³⁴

111. ^dVerily, He knows what is open in speech, and He knows that which you conceal.

112. 'And I know not but that it may be a trial for you, and *only* an enjoyment for a while.'

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ

فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ آذَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ وَإِنْ أَذِرْتَنِي

أَقْرَبُ أَمْ بَعِيدُ ۚ مَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

وَإِنْ أَذِرْنِي لَعَلَّهٗ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ

حِينٍ ﴿١١٢﴾

^a 34 : 29. ^b 18 : 111; 41 : 7. ^c 72 : 26. ^d 2 : 34; 20 : 8; 87 : 8.

2432. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet was an embodiment of Divine mercy. He was a mercy for his followers and a mercy for his opponents. He was a mercy for the unlettered Arabs whom he raised from the lowest depths of moral depravity to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence and he was a mercy for the coming generations inasmuch as he left in the Qur'ān and in his teachings safe and sure guidance for them. He was a mercy for the whole of mankind as his Message is not confined to any particular country or people while every other Prophet before him was sent as a mercy for a particular people. Through him the nations of the world have been blessed as they were not blessed through any other Prophet. There could be no greater praise of the Holy Prophet than the one which God has

bestowed upon him in the Qur'ān in the words:

"There has indeed come to you a Messenger from among yourselves ; grievous to him is that you fall into trouble; he is ardently desirous of your welfare; and to the believers he is particularly compassionate and merciful" (9 : 128).

2433. Commentary :

As against the religion which Gog and Magog profess and preach and which teaches belief in three gods, to declare and proclaim and preach that our God is one God and the belief in the Trinity is false is indeed a difficult task.

2434. Commentary :

The verse makes it clear that God is not bound by dates and hours for the fulfilment of His promises. He knows best if and when a certain prophecy is to be fulfilled.

113. "He *also* said, 'My Lord, judge Thou with truth. Our Lord is the Gracious *God* Whose help is to be sought against that which you assert.'²⁴³⁵

قُلْ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ
عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ۝

* 7 : 90.

2435. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet is commanded to offer the prayer contained in this verse as a protection against the onslaughts of the powers of evil that were to be let loose upon the world in the Latter Days in the form of Gog and Magog. It is clear from the Bible that in the time of Gog and Magog physical force will not be the only danger. There will be other factors which will constitute a far greater source of danger to Islam. Islam will suffer more from the attacks of the pen and the tongue than from physical attacks. These attacks will excite God's anger

against the guilty. In Ezek. 39 : 7 we have: "I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathens shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." Again, "I will be jealous for my holy name" (Ezek. 39 : 25). These quotations show that Gog and Magog will profane God's holy name and against this profanation of God's name the Prophet is commanded to seek Divine help.

The Holy Prophet may also be represented as praying in this verse that the duration of the possession of Palestine by the Jews may be as short as possible and that it may revert to its legitimate heirs—the Muslims.

CHAPTER 22

AL - HAJJ

(Partly revealed before Hijra and partly after Hijra)

According to scholarly opinion this *Sūra* is both of Meccan and Medinite origin. A part of it was revealed before the Hijra and a part after it. Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid are of the opinion that vv. 20, 21, 22 were revealed after the Hijra while Ibn 'Abbās includes v. 23 also in this category. According to Ḍaḥḥāk, however, the whole *Sūra* was revealed after the Hijra.

Order and Arrangement of the *Sūra*

The immediate connection of this *Sūra* with its predecessor, the *Sūra* Al-Anbiyā', consists in the fact that the basic subject dealt with in that *Sūra* was that Divine punishment continues to dog the footsteps of disbelievers because they persistently reject truth. It leads to the evident conclusion that it is only by believing in the Divine Message and leading a good and useful life that man can obtain salvation. This subject was further elaborated and the Holy Prophet was told that disbelievers among his own people too would not escape punishment if they did not believe in him. In the concluding words of the last verse of *Sūra* Al-Anbiyā', viz., *Say, O Lord judge with justice*, the Holy Prophet was enjoined to invoke Divine punishment upon disbelievers because of their persistently hostile attitude, and the opening verse of the present *Sūra*, viz., *O people fear your Lord, the quaking of the Hour is a terrible thing*, constitutes an answer to his prayer. In these words the disbelievers are warned that they can escape Divine punishment only by believing in the Holy Prophet, and by mending their ways and invoking God's mercy and forgiveness.

This is the immediate connection of this *Sūra* with its predecessor. But there exists a broader connection and deeper relationship between the subject-matter of the various *Sūras*. The subject which began in *Sūra* Maryam and was later developed and elaborated in *Sūras* Ṭāhā and Al-Anbiyā' has been brought to completion in the present *Sūra*. In *Sūra* Maryam, the basic principles of the Christian Faith were explained and effectively refuted, as without their refutation there could have been no justification for a new Message. The Holy Prophet had claimed to have brought a new Message and a new Law for the whole of mankind. If Christianity could be shown to have existed in the world in its pristine purity and if there was extant in the world a Faith which claimed to be true and practicable, then the need of a new Faith could not be established. So the basic principles of Christianity had to be proved false and unfounded. This had been done in *Sūra* Maryam ; and by shedding light on the incidents attending Jesus's birth and his claims he was shown in that *Sūra* to be in no way different from and superior to other Messengers of God.

In Chapter Ṭāhā, the Christian doctrine that Law was a curse was fully and completely repudiated and rebutted while in *Sūra Al-Anbiyā'* the same subject was treated in a different manner, and the doctrine of original sin was shown to be quite untenable. It was made clear that if man suffered from the legacy of original sin and being devoid of free will he could not get rid of it, then the very object of the advent of Divine Messengers was defeated and the disbelievers should not have been punished and man should not have been regarded as accountable for his actions and deeds. In the present *Sūra*, however, we are told that if Jesus was a perfect specimen of righteousness and he had attained the highest stage of spiritual development (and the old *Sharī'at* had ceased to function and to be valid any more), then there was no need of a new *Sharī'at* (Law) and a new Messenger. But the fact that the Holy Prophet had claimed to be a Divine Messenger and to have brought a new Law, in itself constitutes a challenge to this baseless Christian belief. The claim of the Holy Prophet rests on five quite sound hypotheses, viz., (1) that his enemies like those of the former Prophets will meet with defeat and destruction ; (2) that his teachings are indispensable for mankind and are based on truth and wisdom ; (3) that his followers will prosper both materially and spiritually ; (4) that he will be blessed with Divine boons and blessings in an unusual measure ; and (5) that all false Faiths and religious systems including Christianity will suffer defeat at his hands.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The disbelievers are threatened with Divine punishment because they have rejected the Holy Prophet and have opposed and persecuted him.

The Prophet has sound and solid arguments to establish the truth of his claim. Mere empty assertions cannot stand before these weighty arguments.

Heavenly Signs also uphold the Prophet's cause and in the face of Divine support his enemies cannot expect to succeed against him.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet are a blessing for mankind and they are designed to bring about peace, harmony and goodwill in the world, while the teachings of his opponents are entirely devoid of all these qualities, on the contrary they only tend to create disharmony and discord. Therefore the two teachings cannot be equal.

The Holy Prophet's advent has fulfilled the second part of Abraham's prayer. His failure means the non-fulfilment of that prayer which is impossible.

The Holy Prophet has met with long and hard opposition and has endured untold hardships with great patience and fortitude. Now the time has arrived that he be granted permission to fight his opponents in self-defence. Islam does not believe in non-resistance of evil under all conditions and circumstances. God will grant the Holy Prophet succour and bestow success on him. His end will be like that of other great Divine Messengers.

All Divine Prophets were opposed, and satanic people placed all sorts of obstacles and impediments in their way. But God removed all those obstacles and the cause of truth ultimately

triumphed. It has happened in the time of every Prophet and it will happen again in the time of the Holy Prophet and God will give him victory and Islam will prevail against all religions.

Defensive warfare is not only permissible but is commendable and Divine succour comes to those who fight in the defence of truth. Had it not been so, truth would have failed in its very object.

Divine teaching, like fresh rain, gives new life and new vigour to a spiritually dead world and therefore it is bound to succeed. This cycle of a new revelation taking the place of an old one goes on. But when a particular teaching has completed its allotted span of life and has served its intended purpose and outlived its utility, then a new teaching takes its place. This constitutes an infallible sign that the old teaching has been subject to human interference and has therefore ceased to satisfy the needs and requirements of the new age and consequently has become deprived of Divine aid. But its followers labouring under the misconception that because their religion had once received Divine help, it must always continue to do so, in their ignorance and perversity foolishly seek to persecute the followers of the new Revelation and to nip the new Message in the bud, but they fail in their nefarious designs. Thus when a teaching which once was attended with Divine assistance becomes deprived of it, a new Faith becomes the vehicle of Divine will and purpose.

The *Sūra* ends with the theme that Divine help will now come to the Holy Prophet because he is the Promised Reformer. His followers should, therefore, give him full and unconditional allegiance. This is the only way to success and victory. The Muslims should bear in mind that not only is the Holy Prophet the Promised Teacher but they too are a Promised People and consequently are bound to succeed.

سُورَةُ الْحَجِّ مَدِينَةٍ (٢٢)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful.²⁴³⁶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. O people, fear your Lord ; verily the earthquake of the Hour is a tremendous thing—²⁴³⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ②

^a See 1 : 1.

2436. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2437. Important Words :

زلزلة (earthquake) is derived from زلزل. They say زلزل الله الأرض *i.e.* God shook the earth. زلله means, he frightened him. زلزل الابل means, he drove the camels harshly. زلزلة means, a shaking of the earth; an earthquake; a calamity; a terrible visitation; زلازل (plural) *i.e.* calamities, miseries, trials, afflictions (Aqrab). The word also means : a war or the effects of war. The last two World Wars were called زلزلة (an earthquake) because they shook the foundation of human society and brought about new political and social changes and also a revolutionary change in the beliefs, ideas and ideals of men. The word has been used in the Qur'ān in the sense of a calamity (2 : 215) and also in the sense of war or the effects of war (33 : 11, 12).

الساعة (Hour) is derived from ساع. They say ساع الشيئ *i.e.* the thing was lost, it degraded. ساعت الابل means, the camels went away grazing without a driver. ساعة means, an hour; a part of time; a while or a little while ; a space; a period; an indefinite time; a watch. الساعة means, the present time; now; just now; this

moment. It also means, difficulty, distress or affliction; distance ; remoteness. الساعة (Hour) or القيامة is used in three senses: (a) death of a great and famous person. It is called القيامة الصغرى or الساعة الصغرى *i.e.* the small resurrection ; (b) a national calamity or the doom that overtakes a whole people on account of their evil deeds. It is called الساعة الوسطى *i.e.* the middle Hour; (c) the Day of Judgment. It is called القيامة الكبرى or الساعة الكبرى *i.e.* the great Hour (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The word الساعة has been used in the Qur'ān in the last two senses mentioned under "Important Words" above. The context shows that in the verse under comment it has been used in the second sense, *i.e.* in the sense of a national calamity that shakes the very foundation of a people. It may have particular reference to the impending doom of the Arabs when Mecca, the citadel of their political power, would fall and their political power and whole social system would break and crumble or it may refer to a terrible calamity that would overtake mankind in the form of a global war and would bring calamitous changes in its wake. The

3. The day when you see it, every woman giving suck shall forget her suckling and every pregnant woman shall cast her burden ; and thou shalt see men as drunken while they will not be drunken, but severe will indeed be the punishment of Allah.²⁴³⁸

يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ
وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ
سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ
شَدِيدٌ ۝٣

4. "And among men there are some who dispute concerning Allah without knowledge, and follow every rebellious satan,"²⁴³⁹

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ
يَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّرِيدٍ ۝٤

^a 13 : 14 ; 22 : 9; 31 : 21; 40 : 70.

present verse read along with 2 : 213 lends further support to the inference that the words الساعة (the Hour) or يوم القيامة (the Day of Judgment) used in the Qur'an generally signify a great national calamity that overtakes a people.

2438. Important Words :

تَذْهَلُ (forget) is derived from ذَهَلَ. They say ذَهَلَ عَنْهُ i.e. he forgot it or neglected it; he was or became unmindful of it; he neglected it intentionally or in consequence of his being diverted by something. ذَهَلَ is the neglecting of a thing, dismissing it from the mind; or the quitting of a thing with confusion or perplexity or alienation of mind such as arises from fear etc., or being diverted from one's constant companion so as to forget him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse has used three metaphors or similes to express the extreme severity of "the earthquake of the Hour," referred to in the preceding verse. Nothing is dearer to a mother than the babe to which she gives suck and there could

be no terror more dreadful in its effects than the one that makes a woman cast down her burden and which drives men to frenzy and yet, the verse says, the suddenness and severity of the terror inspired by the dreadful event would be such that mothers would abandon the babes at their breasts and pregnant women would cast down their burdens and people would go mad with fright and like a drunken man would lose all control over their actions. The wording of the verse incidentally implies that the "Hour" referred to in the preceding verse is not the final Day of Judgment but, as stated in the preceding verse, is the destruction of the political power of Meccans in the form of the fall of Mecca and other calamities that would overtake them, and the victory of Islam.

2439. Important Words :

مَرِيدٌ (rebellious) is derived from مَرَدٌ (marada) which means, he exalted himself; he was insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of disobedience; he was excessively proud or disobedient or rebellious ; he was refractory; he outstripped others in pride or disobedience. مَرَدٌ

5. Concerning whom it is decreed that^awhosoever makes friends with him, him he will lead astray and will guide him to the punishment of the Fire.²⁴⁴⁰

كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ
إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ۝

^a 4 : 39, 120

(*marida*), means it (the tree) became denuded of its leaves. شجر أُمُرد means, a tree devoid of leaves. المرید or المرید means, one who is destitute of good (Lane & Aqrab). See also 9 : 101.

Commentary :

The verse shows that true knowledge is a great Divine boon and all misguidance is the result of the lack of it. At another place (35 : 29) the Qur'ān states that the realization of the Divine Being is vouchsafed only to those who are possessed of true knowledge. The present verse is of general application and applies to no particular person. The words قِائِهِ (concerning Allah) mean, concerning the person, power and attributes of God.

It may be noted here that شيطان (Satan) or ابليس (Iblīs) is the being who has been created by God to incite men to do evil deeds as angels have been created to exhort them to do good deeds and thus he is the exact opposite of the angels, and the object of his creation is to try and test the mettle of men. He has his representatives in every time and age. It is this inciter to evil deeds and his representatives who have been mentioned in the Qur'ān in connection with Adam's story. This inciter to evil deeds will live as long as the world lasts but his representatives in the form of wicked men die and others take their place.

It may also be mentioned here that Satan will not be punished for inciting men to evil deeds

as angels will not be rewarded for exhorting them to do good deeds. Punishment is awarded for deeds which are against the laws of nature or of the *Sharī'at* but to incite men to bad deeds is ingrained in the very nature of Satan and is a part of his being. So the question of punishment in regard to him does not arise. It is true that according to the Qur'ān, Satan will go to Hell just as the angels will go to Heaven but the fire of Hell will cause him no pain or suffering just as the rewards of heaven will give no joy or happiness to the angels. Having been created of fire (7 : 13) Satan is immune from the effects of burning. He is no doubt hated and condemned and denounced because he represents evil and sin but he deserves and will receive no punishment for what is a part of his nature and what he has been created to do. His representatives from among men, however, will certainly be punished for their wicked deeds. See also 2 : 35, 37.

2440. Commentary :

The verse makes it clear that only those are led astray by Satan who first make friends with him and follow him. At another place the Qur'ān says that Satan has no power over the true servants of God. It is only those who accept his evil suggestions and follow him that fall victim to him (16 : 100-101 ; 17 : 66).

The expression يَهْدِيهِ (guides him) contains a beautiful irony. i.e. Satan 'guides' disbelievers to the fire of Hell as if the fire of Hell is a thing

6. O people, if you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, *then consider that* We have indeed created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh, *partly* formed and *partly* unformed, in order that We may make *Our power* manifest to you. "And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term; then We bring you forth as babes; then *We rear you* that you may attain to your *age of* full strength. And there are some of you who are caused to die *prematurely*,^b and there are others among you who are driven to the worst part of life *with the result* that they know nothing after *having had* knowledge. And thou seest the earth lifeless,^a but when We send down water thereon, it stirs and swells, and grows every kind of beauteous vegetation.²⁴⁴¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن عُلَقَةٍ
ثُمَّ مِّن مِّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ
لَكُمْ وَنُقَرِّرُ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَدَّدٍ
ثُمَّ نَخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لَتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ
مَّن يَمُوتُ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يَرُدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا
يَعْلَمَ مِّن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً
فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَبْتَتْ
مِّن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ①

^a 13 : 9; 35 : 12; 41 : 48. ^b 16 : 71; 36 : 69. ^c 16 : 66; 27 : 61; 30 : 49-51; 35 : 28; 45 : 6.

to which they would like to be guided. It is of interest to note that whereas for the righteous it is said that "they are on guidance" or, in other words, they are mounted on guidance, for the wicked it is said that they are led or driven to Hell.

2441. Important Words :

تراب (dust) is derived from ترب which means, it became dusted or dusty ; he had dust in his hand ; he clove to dust or earth ; he clove to the dust or earth by means of poverty. تراب means, dust, earth (Lane).

علقة (clotted blood) is derived from علق which has several meanings. علق به means, it stuck fast, clung or adhered to it; it was or became

suspended by it ; it concerned him or it. علقت المرأة means, the woman became pregnant. علق means, blood or intensely red blood or thick or clotted blood because of its clinging together. "علقه" signifies a portion of clotted blood or the seminal fluid when it becomes thick clotted blood after which it passes to another stage termed مضغة (Lane).

مضغة (lump of flesh) is derived from مضغ. They say مضغ الطعام i.e. he chewed the food. مضغة means, a piece or bit of flesh or a morsel of flesh ; a foetus when it has become like a lump of flesh (Lane & Aqrab).

مخلقة (formed) is derived from خلق for which see 3 : 50. مضغة مخلقة signifies a foetus

when it has become like a lump of flesh perfect or complete in make or of which the make has become apparent (Lane).

هامة (lifeless) is active participle in the feminine gender from همد which means, he or it died or perished. همدت الريح means, the wind became still. همدت الارض means, the land became lifeless, without herbage and without rain (Lane & Aqrab).

هزه (stirs) is derived from هز. They say هزه i.e. he shook it. اهتز النبات means, the plant or herbage became tall. اهتزت الارض means, the land produced herbage or became in motion and produced plants or herbage (Lane & Aqrab). When Sa'd, a very prominent Companion of the Holy Prophet died, he is reported to have exclaimed, اهتز عرش الرحمان لموت سعد بن معاذ i.e. the Throne of the Gracious God shook on account of the death of Sa'd bin Ma'adh.

ربت (swells) is from ربا meaning, it increased or augmented; it became high. ربت الارض means, the earth became large and swelled (Lane). See also 2 : 266 & 3 : 131.

بهيج (beauteous) is derived from بهج (bahuja) i.e. he or it was or became beauteous or beautiful or goodly or beautiful and bright or splendid; or from بهج (bahija) which means, he was or became joyful, glad or happy. بهج به means, he rejoiced in it or at it. Or it may also be said to have been derived from بهج (bahaja). They say بهجه (bahaja) i.e. it made him joyful, glad or happy. بهيج means, beauteous or beautiful and bright or splendid, having a joyful, glad or happy appearance. بهجه means, beauty or goodliness of a thing or its beauty and brightness or splendour; joyfulness, gladness or happiness of appearance (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse proceeds to give arguments to show

that life after death or the Resurrection is an established fact. Man's own creation and physical development is the first argument given in this verse to prove this theme. This creation is a process of evolution, a gradual unfolding, a development from one stage to another, from lifeless matter to a seed, then to a fertilized ovum, then to a foetus and then it culminates in the birth of a perfectly formed human being. But this process of evolution and growth does not stop with man's birth. It continues. A child grows into a full grown man and then he passes on to old age and then to death which is the flight of the human soul from its physical habitat. This wonderful physical growth of man from a lifeless piece of matter to a fully developed human being constitutes an irrefutable proof that the Creator of man and the Author of all these stages of development possesses the power to give him a new life after he is dead.

The inference seems to be that just as the creation and development of man is a process of evolution and gradual growth, in the same way the progress of Islam will also be gradual and in stages.

After this argument in favour of life after death, another argument given in this verse is taken from nature. The verse says that the earth becomes barren, bleak or dead on account of a long period of drought. There is not a blade of grass to be seen on it. Then God sends down rain. The bleak and barren earth begins to vibrate with new life. This phenomenon also leads to the same conclusion that God Who has the power to make the dead and barren earth vibrate with new life has the power to bring man to life after his death. It also leads to the implied inference that by the advent of Islam, a spiritually dead Arabia will

7. That is because Allah is the Truth, and that "it is He Who brings the dead to life, and that He has power over all things ;²⁴⁴²

8. ^bAnd because the Hour will *certainly* come, there is no doubt about it, and because Allah will raise up those who are in the graves.²⁴⁴³

9. ^cAnd among men there is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an enlightening Book.²⁴⁴⁴

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَ
أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ②

وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ ③

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ
لَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ ④

^a 2 : 74 ; 30 : 51 ; 35 : 10 ; 41 : 40 ; 42 : 10 ; 57 : 18. ^b 15 : 86 ; 18 : 22 ; 20 : 16 ; 40 : 60 ; 45 : 33.

^c 22 : 4.

bloom and blossom into new life. See also 23 : 13-15.

2242. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the inescapable inference from the preceding verse is (1) that God is الحق *i.e.* His existence is an established fact and He is the Creator Who creates according to the requirements of wisdom and justice ; (2) that He infuses new life into a spiritually dead people and (3) that He has the power to do all things which are in accordance with His design and device and which fulfil His purpose.

The word الموتى (the dead) here specially signifies those who are spiritually dead. The physically dead are mentioned in the next verse.

2443. Commentary :

The verse continues the theme of its predecessor and like it constitutes an inevitable conclusion to v. 6 *viz.*, "that the Hour will certainly

come and that Allah will raise up those who are in the graves." The expression "who are in the graves" may also refer to those who are spiritually dead and are waiting for a Divine Reformer to come and raise them from their graves, *i.e.* their spiritual death. This expression and the word الموتى (the dead) in the preceding verse may be taken as depicting two aspects of the spiritually dead people.

2444. Commentary :

The verse stresses the importance of true knowledge and reiterates the fact that all deviation from the right path is due to the lack of it. It purports to say that the inference from v. 6 *viz.*, that God is and that He has the power to bring the dead to life, is so patent and manifest that it is only perverse thinking, born of lack of true knowledge, that can deny it.

علم (knowledge) signifies intellectual proof and arguments, هدى Divine guidance and كتاب signifies scriptural evidence.

10. Turning his side *disdainfully*, that he may lead *men* astray from the way of Allah. For him is disgrace in this world ; and on the Day of Resurrection We shall make him taste the punishment of burning.²⁴⁴⁵

ثَانِي عِطْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُ فِي
الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَنُذِيقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَذَابَ
الْحَرِيقِ ⑩

11. "This is because of what thy hands have sent on before, and Allah is not unjust to *His* servants.

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدْ مَتَّ يَدَكَ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ
لِّلْعَبِيدِ ⑪

. 2 12. And among men there is he who serves Allah, *standing as it were*, on the verge. Then ^bif good befall him, he is content therewith ; and if there befall him a trial, he returns to his *former* way. He loses in this world as well as in the Hereafter. That is a manifest loss.²⁴⁴⁶

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ
أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ لِّإِطْمَآنٍ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ
إِنْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ تَفْ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ⑫

^a 3: 183; 8:52; 41:47. ^b 33 : 20; 70 : 21-22.

2445. Important Words :

ثَانِي (turning) is derived from ثنى. They say ثناه i.e. he doubled it or folded it ; he bent it ; he turned him or turned him away or back. ثناه من حاجته he turned him or turned him away or back from the object of his want. ثاني عطفه meaning twisting or bending his back and turning his side, is a metaphor for "behaving proudly." See also 11 : 6 & 15 : 88.

Commentary :

Two kinds of punishment are in store for the deniers of truth, viz., defeat and discomfiture in the present life and disgrace and ignominy in the life to come. The punishment in this life constitutes a proof of punishment in the life to come.

2446. Important Words :

حرف (verge) is infinitive noun from حرف

(harafa). They say حرف الشيء عن وجهه i.e. he turned the thing from its proper way or manner or altered it therefrom. حرف means, the extremity, verge, border, margin, brink, side or edge of anything, as for instance the side of a river, the edge of a sword or the ridge of a mountain. فلان على حرف من امره means, such a one is in a vacillating condition, looking to the result of an affair, he turns to it if he sees what he likes, and turns away from it if he sees what does not please him. من يعبد الله على حرف means, one who serves Allah standing aloof with respect to religion, in a fluctuating state, like the person who is in the outskirts of the army, so that if he is sure of victory and spoil, he stands firm, otherwise he flees away ; or the meaning is, he who serves God in doubt or suspense being unsteady like him who is on the ridge of a mountain ; or the meaning

13. "He calls beside Allah on that which can neither harm him nor benefit him. That is indeed straying far away.

يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا لَا
يَنْفَعُهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾

14. He calls on him whose harm is nearer than his benefit. Evil indeed is the patron, and evil indeed the associate.²⁴⁴⁷

يَدْعُوا لَنْ ضَرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ لَيْسَ
الْبَوْلَى وَلَيْسَ الْعَشِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

^a 6 : 72; 10 : 107; 21: 67; 25 : 56.

is, one who serves God in one mode of circumstances *i.e.* when in ample circumstances and not when in straitened circumstances (Lane).

Commentary :

The sense of the expression *على حرف* (on the verge) is explained in the very next sentence, *viz., if good befall him, he is content therewith; and if there befall him a trial, he returns to his former way.* Taking the word *حرف* in the sense of suspense, the expression would signify that people of weak faith are always in a state of doubt and suspense. If by accepting the message of truth they hope to get some material benefit, they remain and act as believers but if belief is attended with trials and tribulations then they turn back on their heels. Taking this word in the sense of edge or brink, the expression would mean that such people have only a superficial knowledge of religion. They do not enter into its spirit and have no insight into it. Such waverers and doubters are always deprived of the very benefits they hope to

get by their insincere faith.

2447. Commentary :

There may seem to be some contradiction between the subject-matter of this and the previous verse. But in reality there is none. The preceding verse only means that false gods are devoid of all power to do any good or ill to anybody, so it is foolish to worship such worthless objects. The present verse, however, means that the moral injury that the worship of false gods does to their votaries is immediate and quite patent inasmuch as the worshippers degrade themselves before lifeless things and thus do a great injury to their dignity and self-respect, but any benefit that they hope to get from it is imaginary and far-fetched. The verse may also signify that the unreal, temporary and insubstantial worldly gain that the idolaters hope to gain by associating themselves with the community of polytheists is nothing compared with the moral and spiritual injury they do to themselves by their worship of the idols.

15. "Verily, Allah will cause those who believe and do good deeds to enter Gardens beneath which rivers flow; surely Allah does what He will."²⁴⁴⁸

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ
مَا يُرِيدُ ⑮

16. Whoso thinks that Allah will not help him (the Prophet) in this world and the Hereafter, let him, *if he can*, find a way to heaven, and let him cut off *the Divine help*. Then let him see if his device can remove that which enrages *him*.²⁴⁴⁹

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ
الْآخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لْيَقْطَعْ
فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدَهُ مَا يَغِيطُ ⑯

17. And thus have We sent it (the Qur'an) down as manifest Signs, and surely Allah guides whom He will.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ
يُرِيدُ ⑰

* 2 : 278; 4 : 176; 10 : 10; 13 : 30; 14 : 24.

2448. Commentary :

Whereas the preceding two verses purport to say that idol-worshippers get no gain from their evil practices or if at all they happen to derive any benefit from them it is quite insubstantial and transitory, the present verse says that the advantages of true faith and good works are manifold and enduring.

2449. Commentary :

This verse is generally misunderstood and misinterpreted. We have tried to make the meaning clear by supplying the words "the Prophet" within brackets and the expressions "the Divine help" and "if he can" and the pronoun "him" in Italics. The verse seems to hold out a challenge to disbelievers to do their worst against

the Holy Prophet ; and then see if they can stop Divine help which he is constantly receiving and will continue to receive from on high. It is decreed in the heavens that Islam will make steady and uninterrupted progress and that no one can alter the Divine decree ; and that only death will save disbelievers from the humiliating and painful sight of seeing Islam making rapid progress. If the word *سما* be interpreted as "roof" or "ceiling" the verse would signify, "if the opponents of the Holy Prophet are enraged at the success of his mission, then let them hang themselves by fixing a rope to the ceiling and cutting it off. But even then Divine assistance will not stop coming." This meaning is supported by 3 : 120 where disbelievers are reproved and reprimanded in the words, "Die in your rage, surely Allah knows full well what is in your hearts."

18. *As to those who believe, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians, and the Magians and the idolaters, verily, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection ; surely, Allah is Witness over all things.*²⁴⁵⁰

19. Hast thou not seen that "to Allah submits whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind? But there are many who become deserving of punishment. And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none can raise him to honour. Verily, Allah does what He pleases."²⁴⁵¹

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَ
النَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝١٨

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ
وَالشَّجَرُ وَالْدَّوَابُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَكَثِيرٌ
حَقٌّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
مَّكْرٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۝١٩

^a 13 : 16 ; 16 : 49-50 ; 55 : 7.

2450. Important Words :

المجوس (Magians) is derived from مجس (*majjasa*). They say مجسه *i.e.* he made him a Magian. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said ما من مولود الا يولد على الفطرة فأبواه يهودانه و ينصرانه ويمجسانه *i.e.* " Every child is born on the true Islamic nature but his parents make him a Jew, Christian or Magian " (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Janāiz* & Muslim). المجوس (Magians) are a people who worship the sun and the fire ; sometimes the word مجوسي is used for a magician or a philosopher. It applies particularly to the Zoroastrians whose sacred Book is Zend-Avesta. In later Arabic literature, the word is also used to denote the people of northern Europe (Aqrab & Enc. of Islam).

Commentary :

The present verse read in conjunction with

2 : 63 and 5 : 70, clears the misunderstanding to which these two verses are mistakenly understood to give rise. These verses do not bear the construction put upon them by some Christian writers, *viz.*, that Christians, Jews and Sabians are equally eligible to salvation along with true believers. The Qur'ān lends support to no such belief. According to it the only religion acceptable to God is Islam (3 : 20, 86). The present verse lays down only a criterion to test the truth of all these religions and not that it regards all of them as true. The implied criterion is, that of all these religions the true one will prevail over others in the "Hour of Decision."

2451. Commentary :

God has fixed certain laws—natural laws, which all created things, animate or inanimate,

20. These two are two disputants who dispute concerning their Lord. As for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them ; and "boiling water will be poured down over their heads ;²⁴⁵²

21. ^bWhereby that which is in their bellies, and *their* skins too, will be melted ;²⁴⁵³

هَذَيْنِ خَصَصْنِ اخْتَصَصُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
قُطِعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِنْ نَارٍ يُصَبُّ مِنْ فَوْقِ
رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ ﴿٢٠﴾
يُصْهِرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ ﴿٢١﴾

^a 44 : 49 ; 55 : 45 ; 56 : 43-44. ^b 44 : 46.

have to obey. There is no escape from submission to these laws. There are, however, certain other laws—the laws of the *Shari'at*—which God has made for the guidance of man. These laws man may obey or disobey and defy and thus may suffer the consequences of his defiance.

The verse further brings home to idolaters the folly and futility of their taking the objects of nature for worship besides Allah. It says that all these things depend upon Him for their very existence. They all submit to the laws He has fixed for them and cannot live independently of God for a moment. It is sheer folly, therefore, to adore and worship things and beings which are themselves subject to God-made laws. The expression يسجد له كثير من الناس و كثير حق عليه العذاب besides the meaning given in the text, may also mean that many from among men submit to Allah and many others incur His displeasure and punishment because they do not submit to laws made by Him.

2452. Commentary :

The reference in the words " These two " is to two classes of men—the believers and disbelievers, *i.e.* those who obey and willingly submit to the laws of nature and those of the *Shari'at* and those

who flout, disobey and defy these laws. The verse means to say that the second class of men will suffer the evil consequences of their disobedience and defiance.

2453. Important Words :

يصهر (will be melted) is formed from صهر which means, he melted or liquefied fat or a thing ; he or it burned ; he thoroughly cooked with fire. صهرته الشمس means, the sun affected him severely by its heat (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the flouters and defiers of Divine laws will suffer both internal and external punishment, *i.e.* they will lose their peace of mind and will also suffer corporal punishment. The verse also seems to point, on the one hand, to the extreme severity of the punishment of Hell and on the other to its temporary nature. It purports to say that the fire of Hell will burn and melt whatever there would be in the bellies and skins of disbelievers, *i. e.* it will melt away the inward and outward dross and impurities of the sins committed by them and thus after cleansing and purifying them of their impurities and dross will make them deserving of salvation.

22. And for their further punishment there will be maces of iron.²⁴⁵⁴

23. "Whenever they will seek to get out of it from anguish, they will be turned back into it : and it will be said to them, ^b"Taste ye the punishment of burning !" ²⁴⁵⁵

3 24. But Allah will cause those who believe and do good deeds to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow. ^a"They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and with pearls ; and ^dtheir raiment therein will be of silk." ²⁴⁵⁶

وَلَهُمْ مَقَامِعٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ ۝۳۲

كَلِمًا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا

فِيهَا ۚ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ۝۳۳

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا

مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا

حَرِيرٌ ۝۳۴

^a 5 : 38 ; 32 : 21 ; ^b 8 : 15 ; 34 : 43.

^c 18 : 32 ; 35 : 34 ; 76 : 22. ^d 76 : 13.

2454. Important Words :

مَقَامِعٌ (maces) is the plural of مَقْمَعَةٌ which is derived from قَمَعَ. They say قَمَعَهُ i.e. he beat him with a mace or iron rod ; he prevented him by force from what he intended ; he dominated him and disgraced him ; he struck on the upper part of his head. مَقْمَعَةٌ means, a mace ; an iron rod or club to lead an elephant ; a hooked staff (Aqrah).

2455. Commentary :

The expression مِنْ غَمٍّ may also mean, on account of غَمٍّ (anguish), or غَمٍّ being case in apposition with the pronoun هَا (hā), the expression may mean, whenever they will seek to get out of it, i.e. out of غَمٍّ (anguish).

2456. Commentary :

This verse refers to the believers, the second of the two classes of men referred to in v. 20 above. The first class of men—the disbelievers, have been referred to in vv. 20—23 above.

The verse embodies a prophecy which met with remarkable fulfilment. It was made at a time when the very fate of Islam hung in the balance and there was no safety or security for Muslims anywhere. But afterwards in fulfilment of this prophecy they were given most fertile and beautiful countries to rule. They had the choicest of fruits to eat and they lived in gardens beneath which streams flowed. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, "The Nile and the Euphrates are two of the streams of Paradise" (Muslim, ch. *al-Jannah*). So it is clear that the Holy Prophet and his Companions knew that they were promised 'gardens' not only in the next life but in this world also and that they also knew that by 'gardens' in this life were meant rich and fertile lands once ruled by the Kings of Persia and the Emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire. During the Caliphate of 'Umar, Muslim armies fought on two fronts, in Mesopotamia and Syria, and when Arab chiefs with their respective claims presented themselves

25. And they will be guided to pure speech, and they will be guided to the path of the Praiseworthy God.^{2456A}

وَهْدُوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۖ وَهْدُوا إِلَى
صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. As to those who disbelieve, and hinder men from the way of Allah, and from "the Sacred Mosque, which We have appointed equally for all men, be they dwellers therein or visitors from the desert, and whoso seeks wrongfully to deviate therein from the right path—We shall cause him to taste of a grievous punishment.²⁴⁵⁷

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً
إِلْعَاقُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۖ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ
بِظُلْمٍ نَذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْيَمِّ ﴿٢٦﴾

^a 8 : 35; 16 : 89; 43 : 38; 48 : 26.

before him and offered their services, he asked them to which of "the two promised lands," Mesopotamia or Syria, they would like to go. This shows that the Companions of the Holy Prophet knew and understood that the 'gardens' promised them in the Qur'ān were the rich provinces of the Persian Empire and of Syria and Egypt. The prophecy was literally fulfilled. When Persia was conquered, bracelets of gold and pearl and silken garments formed part of the booty. These things were distributed among the Muslims and Surāqa, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, was made by 'Umar to wear the bracelets of gold which the Kings of Persia used to wear on special State occasions. Thus was fulfilled another prophecy of the Holy Prophet according to which he is reported to have once said to Surāqa, "How would you feel when you will be made to wear the golden bracelets of Chosroes (Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubra, vol. II, p. 113).

2456A. Commentary :

The verse shows that Paradise will not be a

place of inactivity or idleness. On the other hand it will be a place of continuous work. Only the nature of the work will be different and there will be no fear of failure or fall as in this life. The spiritual progress of the righteous will be uniform and uninterrupted.

2457. Important Words :

عاكف means, one who dwells in a place or dwells there permanently. Here it means one who dwells in Mecca or dwells in it constantly. See also 2 : 126 & 21 : 53.

الباد (visitor from the desert) is derived from بدا القوم الى البادية i.e. people went forth to the desert, or they went forth from the region of the towns to the pasturing places in the desert. حضارة which means, life in the towns, is contrary to بدوة which means, life in the desert. باد means, one who dwells in بادية i.e. desert or tents; not remaining in his place; one who comes from outside the town, i.e. a visitor or an occasional visitor (Lane & Aqrab).

27. And *remember the time* when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House *and said*, 'Associate not anything with Me and "keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down *and* fall prostrate in Prayer';²⁴⁵⁸

وَاذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ
بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ
وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿٢٧﴾

“ 2 : 126.

Commentary :

This verse serves as an introduction to the subject of Pilgrimage which is the central theme of this *Sūra*. Circumambulation of the Sacred Mosque is the most important of the rituals and ceremonies of Pilgrimage, so a brief reference to the sacredness and importance of the Ka'ba forms a befitting introduction to the subject of Hajj.

The reference in words "those who hinder men from the way of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque" may also be to a well-known incident connected with the Truce of Hudaibiya. In the 7th year of the Hijra, the Holy Prophet, in fulfilment of a vision, left Medina with 1400 Companions to pay a visit to Mecca and perform 'Umra or the Lesser Pilgrimage. When he reached a place called Hudaibiya, he was prevented by the Meccans from proceeding further. He returned to Medina after having signed a truce known as the Truce of Hudaibiya. This Truce, known after the name of the place at which it was signed, led to the conquest of Mecca and eventually of the whole of Arabia.

The verse also points to the Islamic principle of the equality of status of all men in a place of worship and by implication to the inherent equality of all human beings.

2458. Commentary :

The Ka'ba is variously mentioned in the

Qur'ān as *بَيْتِي* i.e. My House (2 : 126 & 22: 27), as *الْبَيْتِ الْمَحْرَمِ* i.e. the Sacred House (14 : 38), as *الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ* i.e. the Sacred Mosque (2 : 151), as *الْبَيْتِ* i.e. the House (2 : 128, 159; 3 : 98; 8 : 36; 22 : 27), as *الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ* i.e. the Ancient House (22 : 30, 34), as *الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ* i.e. the Frequented House (52 : 5) and as *أَوَّلُ بَيْتٍ* i.e. the First House (3 : 97). All these different appellations point to the eminence of the Ka'ba as being the greatest centre of worship for mankind.

The words "We assigned to Abraham the site of the House" show that the site of the Ka'ba had existed before Abraham's time. In fact the Ka'ba was built by Adam and as it appears from 3 : 97, it was the first House of worship built in the world. By the time of Abraham it had fallen into ruins and its site having been disclosed to him by revelation he and his son Ishmael, the Holy Prophet's great progenitor, rebuilt it.

The words "keep My House clean" embodied both a commandment and a prophecy. The commandment was that the Ka'ba was not to be polluted with idol-worship as it had been built for the worship of the One True God and the prophecy lay in the fact that this commandment would be defied and the House of God would become the house of idols but would eventually be completely cleared of them. The prophecy was fulfilled when at the fall of Mecca the Ka'ba was cleared by the Holy Prophet of all the

28. "And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track,"^{2458A}

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى
كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ۝٢٨

^a 2 : 198; 3 : 98.

abominations and of the 360 idols that were kept in it. Thus the commandment, in a way, embodied a prophecy about the advent of the Holy Prophet ; and the rebuilding of the Ka'ba by Abraham and Ishmael was, in fact, the first step towards the fulfilment of that great prophecy. See also 2 : 128-130.

2458A. Important Words :

رجالا (on foot) is the plural of راجل , which means, one who walks on foot, a footman. رجل راجل means, a great walker (Lane). See also 2 : 240.

ضامر (lean camel) is active participle from ضمر which means, he or it was or became lean or slender and lean or lean and lank in the belly. ضامر means, lean and lank in the belly ; a horse in a state of preparation for racing by its having been fed with food barely sufficient to sustain it after having become fat. خيل ضامرة means, horses in that state, i. e. lean and lank horses (Lane).

عميق (distant) is derived from عمق which means, it was or became deep. عميق when applied to a road means, remote or far-extending or long. بئر عميقة means, a deep well (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The Pilgrimage as an institution began with Abraham as the words "and proclaim unto

mankind the Pilgrimage" show. It was not an idolatrous institution incorporated into Islam by the Holy Prophet to conciliate the idol-worshipping Arabs as some Christian writers have been led to think. From the time of Abraham, Pilgrimage has continued without a break to this day and will continue till the end of time. The Ka'ba was once the centre of Pilgrimage for the Arabs alone, but now it is the centre of Pilgrimage for the whole Muslim world and is destined to become the spiritual centre for all mankind. It is when Islam will prevail in the world that the Ka'ba will become a symbol of the Unity of God and of mankind. The time is not far off when there will be only One God, one Religion, one Prophet and one Book with the Ka'ba as the one spiritual centre for the whole of mankind. That the Ka'ba was destined one day to come into the possession of the Holy Prophet who was to set free captives "not for price nor reward" and at whose hands it was to become the spiritual centre for the whole of mankind was foretold several hundred years before the advent of the Holy Prophet by the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's prophecy is as follows :

I have raised him up in righteousness ; and I will direct his ways : He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts. . . the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine : They shall come

29. 'That ^athey may witness *its* benefits for them and may mention the name of Allah, ^bduring the appointed days, over the quadrupeds of *the class of* cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed, the needy.²⁴⁵⁹

لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي
أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ۝٢٩

^a 2 : 199; 5:3. ^b 2 : 204.

after thee ; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee ; and there is none else, there is no God (Isaiah 45 : 13-14).

The prophecy is too clear to need any explanation. It evidently applies to the Holy Prophet.

The verse also constitutes a mighty prophecy. The proclamation that Ka'ba would one day become a great centre to which people from distant lands would come to perform Hajj was made at Mecca at a time when the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance. Life was not safe for the Holy Prophet and his followers. They were being driven away from their hearths and homes and did not know where to go. It was at that time that it was proclaimed to the world, as if with a beat of drum, that to the Ka'ba would come people from all parts of the earth. The gathering in Mecca every year of many hundreds of thousands of Muslims from very distant lands bears an irrefutable testimony to the remarkable fulfilment of this prophecy.

2459. Commentary :

Apart from the spiritual good that the Pilgrimage does to a Muslim, it possesses great social and political significance. It has great potential-

ities for welding different Muslim countries into one strong international brotherhood of Islam. Muslims from all parts of the world who meet at Mecca once a year can exchange views on all sorts of matters of international importance, renew old and establish new contacts. They have opportunities to acquaint themselves with the problems that confront their brethren in Faith in other countries, to copy one another's good points and profit by one another's experience and also to co-operate with one another in many other ways. Mecca being God's appointed centre of Islam, the Pilgrimage can serve as a sort of a United Nations Organization for the whole Muslim world. All other religions have failed to produce such a forum for the exchange of international ideas and programmes. But it is regretted that Muslims have not yet awakened to the realization of Mecca being an international capital for the whole Muslim world. These are some of the material benefits and advantages to which reference has been made in the words, "that they may witness its benefits;" and the words "and may mention the name of Allah," refer to the great spiritual benefits which Muslims can and should derive from the Pilgrimage to Mecca. See also 3 : 98.

30. 'Then let them accomplish their needful acts of cleansing, and fulfil their vows, and go around the Ancient House.'²⁴⁶⁰

ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نُدُورَهُمْ وَلِيَطَّوُّوْا

بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ③

2460. Important Words :

لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ (accomplish their needful acts of cleansing). تَفَثَ (tafathun) is infinitive noun from تَفَثَ (tafatha) which means, he left off shaving his pubes and in consequence became dirty. تَفَثَ قَضَى means, he removed his uncleanness. The Quranic expression لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ means, then let them accomplish their needful acts of shaving and cleansing (Lane & Aqrab).

العتيق (ancient) is derived from عَتَقَ. They say, عَتَقَ الْعَبْدَ i.e. the slave became free. عَتَقَتِ الْخَمْرُ means, the wine became old and good. عَتِيقٌ means, free from slavery or emancipated; old; beautiful; excellent (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words, "and go round the acient House," refer to the last *ṭawāf* or circumambulation round the Ka'ba.

The seven circuits round the Ka'ba correspond to seven prayers of Abraham which he uttered when, with the assistance of his son Ishmael, he was building the Ka'ba. The prayers are given in 2 : 129-130 and are as follows :

1. "Our Lord make us submissive to Thee ;
2. "and make of our offspring a people submissive to thee ;
3. "show us our ways of worship ;
4. "turn to us with mercy ;
5. "raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves ;
6. "who may recite to them thy Signs, may teach them the Book and wisdom ;

7. "and may purify them."

In view of the three meanings of the root-word عَتَقَ, the expression البيت العتيق would mean, free, excellent and very old House. The epithet 'free' implies a prophecy that no hostile power will ever be able to conquer it. It shall always remain free. The second epithet, i.e. excellent, signifies that the Ka'ba shall always occupy a position of honour in the world. It has also been described as البيت الحرام (the Sacred House) in the Qur'ān. The fact that the Ka'ba is a very ancient House of worship in the world finds corroboration in another verse of the Qur'ān (3 : 97) where it is said that it is the very first House founded for Divine worship. In 14 : 38 we find that the Ka'ba was in existence long before Abraham brought his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael to settle in the barren, bleak and arid valley of Mecca. Noah is believed by some to have performed the circuit of the Ka'ba (Ṭabarī as quoted by Enc. of Islam). Historians of established repute and authority, including even some very hostile critics of Islam, have admitted that the Ka'ba had been held sacred from time immemorial. Diodorus Siculus writing about the region now known as the Hijāz says that there is in this country a temple greatly revered by all the Arabs "to which the neighbouring peoples throng from all sides." "These words," says Sir William Muir, "must refer to the Holy House of Mecca for we know of no other which ever commanded the universal homage of Arabia.....Tradition represents the Ka'ba as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from all quarters

31. That is *God's commandment*.
 "And whoso honours the sacred things of Allah, it will be good for him with his Lord. ^bAnd the eating of the flesh of all cattle is made lawful to you except that which has already been announced to you in the *Qur'an*. Shun, therefore, the abomination of idols, and shun all words of untruth, ²⁴⁶¹

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ حُرْمَتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ الْآنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ ﴿٣١﴾

32. *Remaining* ever inclined to Allah, not associating anything with Him. And whoso associates anything with Allah, falls, as it were, from a height, and the birds snatch him away or the wind blows him away to a distant place. ²⁴⁶²

حُنْفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

*5 : 3. ^b5 : 2; 6 : 146.

of Arabia.....so extensive an homage must have had its beginning in an extremely remote age" (Muir, p. ciii).

The fact seems to be that the Ka'ba was first built by Adam and after it was washed away by the great Deluge in the time of Noah was later rebuilt by Abraham. See also 2 : 128-129.

2461. Commentary :

The words, "whoso honours the sacred things of Allah, it will be good for him with his Lord," signify that a Muslim should not treat lightly or with disrespect such things as God has sanctified or held sacred. The words cover all those things and persons that God has honoured.

In the last sentence of the verse lying and idol-worship have been condemned as equally heinous. Of all abominations, lying, perhaps, plays the greatest part in the moral degradation of a man, second only to idol-worship.

The verse also points to the great truth that without fully subscribing to the belief in Divine Unity it is impossible to get rid of mental confusion and bewilderment and to enjoy real peace of mind. An idolater falls an easy victim to unfounded superstitious fears.

2462. Commentary :

Man is the noblest creation of God. The whole universe—the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the oceans, the mountains, etc., have been made to serve him. He can rise morally and spiritually so high as to reflect in his person the Divine attributes. So if man whom God has given the highest place in His whole creation degrades himself so low as to worship lifeless objects, he falls, as it were, from the heights of spiritual eminence to the depths of moral and intellectual degradation. This, in brief, is the purport of this verse.

A brief note on idolatry is here called for. Broadly speaking idolatry consists in the

33. That is so. "And whoso honours the sacred Signs of Allah—that indeed *proceeds* from the righteousness of hearts.²⁴⁶³

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمُ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى

الْقُلُوبِ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. In these (offerings) are benefits for you for an appointed term, then ^btheir place of sacrifice is at the Ancient House.²⁴⁶⁴

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَا

إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a 2 : 159. ^b 2 : 197 ; 48 : 26.

paying of Divine honours to idols, images or any created object ; the ascription of Divine powers to natural agencies and the excessive admiration, veneration or love for any person or thing. Besides this, idolatry has several other subtler forms. Some of these are as follows :

1. To believe that there are more beings than one who possess equal and similar powers and attributes and who have equal share in the creation and control of the universe with God.

2. To show allegiance or veneration to beings or objects other than God in the form of acts and movements of the body which are expressive of the highest veneration for those beings or objects and which are prescribed by different religions to be offered only to the Supreme Being and which have been regarded as part of worship, such as prostration, etc.

3. To rely fully and completely upon material means for the fulfilment of one's needs to the entire exclusion of trust in God.

4. To ascribe to human beings attributes which are God's own exclusive prerogatives, such as His being Eternal and Everlasting and His attribute of creation or quickening the dead.

5. To think of a person that he has attained to such stage of nearness to God that God is bound to and does accept all his prayers. This amounts to ascribing Divine powers to him.

6. To entertain feelings of love, veneration for, or fear of, any human being greater or even equal to those which he has for God. All these different forms of idolatry have been expressed by the four words used by the Qur'ān, viz., ند (like or equal) ; شريك (co-partner or sharer) ; اله (worthy of worship) and رب (sustainer).

2463. Commentary :

For شعائر الله see 2 : 159 & 5 : 3. The verse implies that the object underlying all the commandments and ordinances of Islam is to inculcate righteousness and purity of heart. All Islamic rites and acts of worship are only means that lead to this supreme goal.

2464. Commentary :

The animals that are brought to Mecca for sacrifice may be used for riding, and carrying burdens or their milk may be used before they are sacrificed. They can serve other useful purposes.

5. 35. And to every people We appointed rites of Sacrifice, that "they might mention the name of Allah over the quadrupeds of *the class of cattle* that He has provided for them. So ^byour God is One God ; therefore, submit ye *all* to Him. And give thou glad tidings to the humble,²⁴⁶⁵

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِّيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ
عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِن بَيْهِيْمَةٍ الْآنْعَامِ فَالْهَكْمُ
إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ^{٢٤٦٥}

^a 5 : 5 ; 6 : 119 ; ^b 5 : 74 ; 16 : 23 ; 37 : 5.

2465. Important Words :

نَسَك (rites of sacrifice) is derived from نَسَكَ. They say نَسَكَ الذَّيْبِيْحَةَ i.e. he slaughtered and sacrificed the animal. نَسَكَ الرَّجُلُ means, the man led a life devoted to God ; he practised virtue and piety. نَسَكَ اللَّهَ means, he sacrificed seeking to win the pleasure of God ; he did good deeds willingly and spontaneously in order to win nearness to God. نَسَكَ الثَّوْبَ means, he washed the cloth. مَنْسَك means, rites of sacrifice ; place where those rites are performed ; one's native place. مَنَاسِكُ الْحَجِّ means, the religious rites and ceremonies of the Pilgrimage.

For مَخْبِتِينَ see 11 : 24.

Commentary :

With this verse begins the subject of Sacrifice, one of the three main themes with which this *Sūra* deals, the other two being Hajj and Jihād.

The words "And to every people We appointed rites of Sacrifice," show that the commandment relating to Sacrifice is not confined to Islam. Sacrifice is common to all religions because they have proceeded from the same Divine Source. It also appears from this verse that it was the sacrifice of animals that was originally enjoined on the followers of all religions and that the cruel practice of offering human beings as sacrifice was a later innovation.

In view of the different meanings of the root-word نَسَكَ, true sacrifice possesses three essential characteristics :-

- It should be fully voluntary and spontaneous ;
- It should be offered with the purest of motives, i.e. only to win the pleasure of God ;
- It should not be offered from ulterior motives and material considerations.

Thus the first commandment relating to Sacrifice though apparently very simple is of great inward significance. It is that sacrifice should be offered only for the sake of Allah and that Allah's name should be invoked while the animal is being slaughtered for food. This not only sanctifies and blesses the food but is also calculated to turn attention to the sublime object underlying the act of slaughtering the animal—to win the pleasure of God and to be prepared to sacrifice the dearest thing in His way and for His sake.

The words, "So your God is one God, therefore, submit ye all to Him," have twofold significance: (1) The fact that the rite of Sacrifice is common to all religions, although they are so widely separated from one another as regards the time and place of their origin, shows that originally they all emanated from the same

36. "Whose hearts are filled with fear when *the name of Allah* is mentioned, and who patiently endure whatever befalls them, and who observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them."²⁴⁶⁶

37. And among the sacred Signs of Allah We have appointed for you the sacrificial camels. In them there is *much* good for you. So mention the name of Allah over them as they stand tied up in lines. And when they fall down *dead* on their sides, eat thereof and feed him who is *needy but* contented and him who supplicates. Thus have We subjected them to you, that you may be thankful.²⁴⁶⁷

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمُ وَالصَّابِرِينَ
عَلَى مَا أَصَابَهُمُ وَالْبُقِيَّ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ فَإِذَا
وَجِبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِيعُوا الْقَانِعَ وَ
الْمُعْتَرَّ ۚ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

* 23 : 61.

Supreme Source and that the God of all nations is one God. (2) That the object underlying Sacrifice is to realize and proclaim the Oneness of God by sacrificing our ambitions and aspirations, all our ideas and ideals and even life and honour for His sake, and by completely submitting ourselves to His commandments. The concept of Sacrifice according to Islam does not consist in appeasing an offended deity or in atoning for one's sins but in sacrificing one's all for the sake of God and in the way of God. Those who have full realization of this concept of Sacrifice are called *المخبتين* (humble) in the language of the Qur'an.

2466. Commentary :

This verse gives the four-fold object of Sacrifice or the four characteristics of *المخبتين* i.e. those who have realized the real significance of Sacrifice. (1) Their hearts are filled with fear when Allah is mentioned ; (2) they patiently

bear all sorts of hardships and privations in the way of God ; (3) they purify themselves by saying their Prayers regularly and punctually and (4) they serve mankind with all that God has bestowed upon them—with all the means at their disposal.

2467. Important Words :

البدن (sacrificial camels) is the plural of *بدنه* which means, a she-camel or a male camel ; a cow and a bull (preferably the first and the second) that is slaughtered at Mecca or brought there for sacrifice, so called because of its fatness, *بدن* (*badana*) as a verb meaning, he was or became big, bulky, big-bodied or corpulent or fat (Lane & Aqrab).

صواف (stand tied up in rows) is the plural of *صوافه* which is derived from *صوف*. They say *صواف القوم* i.e. the people stood in rows. *صواف* means, standing in rows (Lane).

38. Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him. Thus has He subjected them to you, that you may glorify Allah for His guiding you. And give glad tidings to those who do good.²⁴⁶⁸

لَنْ يَبَالِ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَافُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَبَالِ
التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ
عَلَى مَا هَدَكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْحَسَنِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وجب الحائط (they fall down). They say وجب الرجل *i.e.* the wall fell down. وجب الشمس means, the man fell down and died. وجبت الشمس means, the sun set. فاذا وجبت جنوبها means, when their sides fall upon the ground ; when they die and fall down (Lane).

قانع (contented) is active participle from قنع (*qania'*) which means, he was contented with his lot ; and also from قنع (*qanaa'*) which means, he asked, he begged. قنع الجبل means, he ascended the mountain. القانع means, one who is contented with his lot ; one who asks or begs ; one who leaves one place for another ; the servant of a people (Aqrab).

المعتز (one who supplicates) is derived from عر (*'arra*). They say عره *i.e.* he vexed him ; he did evil to him ; he addressed or applied himself to obtain favour without asking ; he came to him and sought his bounty. المعتز means, one who applies oneself to obtain favour without asking ; one who comes to another to ask for a favour ; a poor man (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse signifies that the slaughtering of camels which are brought to Mecca for sacrifice is but a symbol of man's readiness to lay down his life for the sake of his Creator and Master just as camels lay down their lives for their own masters. This is the supreme object and purpose of Sacrifice, other objects mentioned in the

verse being of secondary importance. The pilgrim is reminded of the significance of Sacrifice when he slaughters an animal and thus the animal serves as a Sign of God.

2468. Commentary :

This verse throws a flood of light on the essence, inwardness and real object and purpose of Sacrifice. It also teaches a supreme lesson, *viz.*, that it is not the outward act of sacrifice which pleases God but the spirit underlying it and the motive behind it. The flesh or blood of the slaughtered animal does not reach God ; it is righteousness of the heart which is acceptable to Him. God demands and accepts total sacrifice of all that is near and dear to us—our material possessions, the ideals that are so dear to us, our honour and life itself. In reality, God wants and demands no offering from us in the form of flesh and blood of animals but the offering of our hearts.

We should not, however, be understood to mean that because it is not the outward act of sacrifice but the motive behind it that really matters, the outward act is of no importance. True, the outward act of sacrifice is the shell and the spirit underlying it is the kernel and essence yet the shell or the body of a thing, like its soul, spirit or kernel, is also of very great importance because no soul could exist without a body and no kernel without a shell.

39. Surely, Allah defends those who believe. Surely, Allah loves not anyone who is perfidious or ungrateful. ²⁴⁶⁹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

2469. Commentary :

With this verse is introduced the subject of Jihād. The theme of Sacrifice has formed a befitting prelude to this all-important subject. Having explained the importance and significance of Sacrifice, the Qur'ān proceeds to tell Muslims that the time has arrived that they should be prepared to undergo all manner of sacrifice in the defence of their Faith which the enemy is out to destroy. Before the permission to fight in self-defence was given to Muslims, they were apprised of the importance of Sacrifice. The words, "Surely, Allah defends those who believe," throw a flood of light on the Islamic conception of Jihād. Jihād, as these words show, is fighting in defence of truth. But whereas Islam allows no aggressive war, it regards the waging of it in self-defence as an act of the highest virtue. Because much misconception prevails regarding the Islamic teaching about Jihād and because Islam has been much maligned and subjected to much wilful and deliberate misrepresentation on this account a somewhat detailed note is called for on this subject.

Man is God's noblest handiwork. He is the acme of His creation, its aim and end. He is God's Vicegerent on earth and the King of His whole creation (2 : 30). To him even angels in heaven make obeisance and for him all animate and inanimate things—the earth, the heaven, the sun, moon, stars, mountains, oceans, rivers, ani-

mals, and birds, have been created and to him they have been made subservient (14 : 33, 34 ; 35 : 14). This is the Islamic conception of man's high place in the universe. It is therefore only natural that that religion which has raised man to such a high pedestal should have attached very great importance and sanctity to his life. Of all things man's life, according to the Qur'ān, is most sacred and inviolable. It is a sacrilege to take it except under very rare circumstances which the Qur'ān has specifically mentioned. According to the Qur'ān the killing of a person without a just cause is tantamount to the killing of the whole of mankind (17 : 34 ; 5 : 33) ; so sacred and sanctified is man's life.

No less important, according to Islam, is freedom of conscience. It is man's most precious heritage—perhaps more precious than life itself. The Qur'ān, which has attached the greatest sanctity to man's life, could not have failed to acknowledge and declare the sacredness and inviolability of this, his most precious possession. "Let there be no compulsion in religion," says the Qur'ān (2 : 256). It abounds in verses of like import which shows that not only Islam does not encourage the use of force for the spread of its teaching but positively and in most emphatic terms forbids and condemns it and gives man unrestricted choice in the matter of his faith and belief. Here are some of them :

Say, 'O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows

- 6 40. Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has power to help them—²⁴⁷⁰

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلُمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ
نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whosoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you (10 : 109).

And say, It is the truth from your Lord; therefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve (18 : 30).

We know best what they say; and thou hast not been appointed to compel them in any way. So admonish by means of the Qur'ān him who fears My warning (50 : 46).

So remind. Thou art only one to remind. Thou art not a warden over them (88 : 22-23).

These verses, as it were, make an unequivocal declaration about the Freedom of human conscience or the Magna Charta of the liberty of man's beliefs and convictions. The injunctions embodied in these verses have not remained a dead letter. The Holy Prophet and his Companions lived up to them and strictly obeyed them even if acting upon them meant loss of prestige as it happened at the time of signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, or when the Jewish tribe of Banū Nadīr, on their banishment from Medina, were allowed to take with them the scions of the Muslim families of Aus and Khazraj, much against the remonstrances of their Muslim relatives, because they (the scions) had chosen to go with the Jews (Abū Dawūd, *kitāb al-Jihād*, & Manthūr). It is also on record

that 'Umar, the second Caliph presented Islam on several occasions to a Christian slave of his, Asbaq by name, but every time he refused to accept it (Manthūr). Instances of such tolerant behaviour on the part of the leaders of Islam during the ages can easily be multiplied. In the face of such magnanimous display of religious tolerance it seems unbelievable that Islam should have been accused of fanaticism and bigotry or of having been spread by force, but it is a sad fact of history that it has been so maligned and accused by its hostile critics.

2470. Commentary :

According to consensus of scholarly opinion this is the first verse which gave Muslims permission to take up arms in self-defence. The verse was revealed very early in Medina. "It is much more reasonable," says Wherry, "to suppose with Muir that this command emanated from Medina. Noldeke also relegated this command to Medina" (Wherry's Commentary).

The next verse also lends support to this inference. It states that the permission to fight was given after the Muslims had been driven out of their hearths and homes. If, as some Commentators of the Qur'ān hold, the verse was revealed at Mecca, it must have been revealed immediately before Hijra when most of the Muslims had already emigrated to Medina and the Holy Prophet with only a very few Muslims had remained behind in Mecca and their cup of hardships and privations had become full to the

41. Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly, only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah'—
 "And if Allah did not repel some people by means of others, there would surely have been destroyed cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. ^bAnd Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty—²⁴⁷¹

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ
 يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ
 بِبَعْضٍ لَهْذِهِمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَ
 مَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ
 اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٤٧١﴾

^a2 : 252 : ^b47 : 8.

brim. But the former view seems to be more akin to fact and reality.

The verse lays down principles according to which Muslims can wage a defensive war, and clearly sets forth the reasons which led a handful of Muslims, without arms and other material means, to fight in self-defence after they had suffered at Mecca ceaseless persecution for years and had been pursued with relentless hatred to Medina and were harassed and harried there too. The first and foremost reason given is that "they had been wronged." The Muslims had suffered untold persecution and war was actually forced upon them. The verse incidentally shows that the Muslims were also very weak in numbers, means and material when the permission to fight in self-defence was granted to them as the comforting and encouraging words, "And Allah indeed has power to help them," indicate. These words also implied a prophecy that though the Muslims were weak and their enemy was proud and powerful, yet as they were fighting in the cause of truth God would help them and they would be victorious.

2471. Important Words :

صوامع is the plural of صومعة which is derived from صومع. They say صومع الشيء i.e. he collected

together the thing. صومع البناء means, he raised the building. صومعة means a mountain ; a high place where a monk lives or a holy man worships seeking solitude ; a cloister ; the cell of a recluse (Aqrab & Lane).

بيع (churches) is the plural of بيعة which means, a church or, as some say, a Jewish place of worship (Aqrab & Lane).

صلوات Places of worship of the Jews (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse gives the second reason which led the poor and weak Muslims to take up arms. It was that they were driven out from their hearths and homes without a just and legitimate cause, their only crime being that they believed in one God. For years the Muslims were persecuted at Mecca, then they were driven out from it and were not left in peace even in their exile at Medina. They continued to be harassed in that place also. Islam was threatened with complete extirpation by a combined attack from the Arabian tribes round Medina, among whom the influence of the Quraish, on account of their being the custodians of the Ka'ba, was very great. Medina itself was honey-combed with sedition and treachery. The Jews, compact and united, were opposed

to the Holy Prophet. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, whose designs to become the crowned king of Medina had been upset by the Holy Prophet's arrival in that city, and the Hypocrites were an additional source of great danger to Islam. The Quraish held out a threat to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy that if the people of Medina gave shelter to the Holy Prophet and did not make common cause with them against Muslims they would attack Medina with all their powerful hosts and allies and would kill their men and carry their women to Mecca in captivity (Abū Dawūd). Thus Islam had to defend itself against much more powerful enemies at Medina than at Mecca. The position of Muslims in the first few years of their life at Medina was decidedly much weaker than at Mecca and the Holy Prophet's difficulties instead of lessening had greatly increased. It was under these highly unfavourable circumstances that Muslims had to take up arms to save themselves, their Faith and their Holy Prophet from extermination. If ever a people had a legitimate cause to fight, it were the Holy Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions, and yet the unconscionable critics of Islam have accused him of waging aggressive wars to impose his Faith on an unwilling people. See also 9 : 13.

After having given reasons why the Muslims were obliged to take up arms, the verse proceeds to mention the object and purpose of the wars of Islam. The object was never to deprive anybody of his home and possessions or to deprive whole peoples of national freedom or compel them to submit to foreign yoke under the garb of making them civilized as Western nations do, or to explore new markets and get new colonies. It was to fight in self-defence and to save Islam from extermination and to establish freedom of conscience and liberty of thought. It was also to defend places

of worship belonging to different religions against desecration or destruction. Having laid down the principle that all religions have their origin in Divine revelation and that the Founders of all religions were Divine Messengers and should therefore be equally respected (35 : 25), the Qur'ān in the present verse has enjoined upon the Muslims to defend, even with their lives, all the places of worship—the churches, the synagogues, the temples, the cloisters, etc. This subject also finds an echo in vv. 2 : 194 ; 2 : 257 ; 8 : 40 ; 8 : 73. Thus the first and foremost object of the wars of Islam was, and will always be, to establish freedom of belief and worship and to fight in defence of country, honour and freedom against an unprovoked attack. Could there be a better cause to fight for than this ? The Islamic injunctions as embodied in the present verse did not remain merely pious principles. They were acted upon by Muslims in daily life. The Muslims in the hey-day of their power and glory always allowed complete freedom of belief and worship to people who accepted their protection and guardianship. To show the broad-mindedness and catholicity of Islamic teaching in this respect, we give below only one of several charters of freedom which the Holy Prophet granted to the followers of other Faiths :

This is the document which Muḥammad, son of 'Abdullah, God's Prophet, Warner and Bearer of glad-tidings, has caused to be written so that there should remain no excuse for those coming after. I have caused this document to be written for Christians of the East and the West, for those who live near, and for those of the distant lands, for the Christians living at present and for those who will come after, for those Christians who are known to us and for those as well whom we do

42. Those who, if We establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and pay the Zakât and enjoin good and forbid evil. And with Allah rests the final issue of all affairs. ²⁴⁷²

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٢٤٧٢﴾

not know. Any Muslim violating and abusing what is therein ordered would be regarded as violator of God's testament and would be the breaker of His promise and would make himself deserving of God's curse, be he a king or a subject. I promise that any monk or way-farer, etc. who will seek my help on the mountains, in forests, deserts or habitations, or in places of worship, I will repel his enemies with all my friends and helpers, with all my relatives and with all those who profess to follow me and will defend him, because they are my covenant. And I will defend the covenant against the persecution, injury and embarrassment by their enemies in lieu of the poll-tax they have promised to pay. If they will prefer themselves to defend their properties and persons, they will be allowed to do so and will not be put to any inconvenience on that account. No bishop will be expelled from his bishopric, no monk from his monastery, no priest from his place of worship, and no pilgrim will be detained in his pilgrimage. None of their churches and other places of worship will be desolated or destroyed or demolished. No material of their churches will be used for building mosques or houses for the Muslims, any Muslim so doing will be regarded as recalcitrant to God and His Prophet. Monks and bishops will be subject to no tax or indemnity whether they live in forests or on the rivers, or in the East or West, North or South. I give them my word of honour. They are on my promise and covenant and will enjoy perfect immunity from all sorts of inconveniences. Every help shall be given them in the repair of their churches. They shall be absolved from wearing arms. They shall be protected by the

Muslims. Let this document be not disobeyed till the Judgment Day (Balādhari).

Similar charters were granted to the followers of other Faiths. True Muslims have always tried to follow faithfully the example of their Prophet.

The words, "And Allah will surely help one who helps Him," signify that Muslim armies will receive Divine help because they fight Allah's own battles and promote the sacred cause which is very dear to Him.

2472. Commentary :

The verse lays down some principles of universal application :

Firstly : Those true servants of God are entitled to receive God's help, power and authority to use it for the good of humanity who do their duty to God and man, and are devout and God-fearing, who help their fellow beings with all the means at their disposal and not only themselves live righteous lives but exhort others to lead good and useful lives and abstain from evil.

Secondly : Any nation or people who seek to receive Divine help and rise to power and influence should act upon these principles.

Thirdly : A nation or people on whom God confers power and dominion continue to enjoy these blessings so long as they observe these principles. To this sublime principle another verse

43. ^aAnd if they accuse thee of falsehood, even so, before them, the people of Noah and the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd also accused their Prophets of falsehood.²⁴⁷³

44. And so did the people of Abraham and the people of Lot ;²⁴⁷⁴

45. And the inhabitants of Midian. And Moses too was accused of falsehood. But I gave respite to the disbelievers ; then I seized them, and how terrible was the consequence of denying Me !

46. ^bAnd how many a city have We destroyed, while it was given to wrong-doing, so that it is fallen down on its roofs ; and how many a deserted well and lofty castle!²⁴⁷⁵

وَأِنْ يَكْذِبْ بُّوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ
وَإِذَا وَتَمُودُ ۝

وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ ۝

وَاصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ ۚ وَكَذَّبَ مُوسَى فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ
ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ۝

فَكَانَ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ
خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَبْرُؤُ مَعْطَلَةٌ وَقَصْرِ
مَشِيدٍ ۝

^a 6 : 35 ; 35 : 26 ; 40 : 6 ; 54 : 10. ^b 7 : 5 ; 21 : 12 ; 28 : 59 ; 65 : 9-10.

of the Qur'ān also refers, viz., "Verily, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change their own condition" (13 : 12).

The verse incidentally implies a commandment for the Muslims that when they get power, they should not use it for the furtherance of their own selfish ends but should employ it in ameliorating the lot of poor and down-trodden people and in establishing peace and tranquillity in their dominions and should particularly respect and protect places of worship. It also shows that the Companions of the Holy Prophet were granted power, dominion and wealth because they lived up to the principles enunciated in this verse and that when they attained power and wealth they used it in the service of humanity.

2473. Commentary :

The verse means to say that those who reject God's Prophets and do not observe the princi-

ples laid down in the preceding verses invite and incur Divine wrath. As an illustration the verse gives the instances of the people of Noah, and of the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd. These peoples were visited with God's punishment because they ignored and defied His commandments.

2474. Commentary :

This and the next verse give the instances of the people of Abraham and Lot and of the inhabitants of Midian and those who rejected Moses. All these peoples had their due share of Divine punishment for their evil deeds. They had been given sufficient time to mend their ways but they did not profit by the respite granted to them.

2475. Important Words :

خَاوِيَةٌ (fallen) is derived from خوى. They say خوى البيت i.e. (1) the house fell down in ruins;

47. "Have they not travelled in the land, so that they may have hearts wherewith to understand, or ears wherewith to hear? For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts.²⁴⁷⁶

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ
يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا
تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي

الْصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٤﴾

48. ^bAnd they ask thee to hasten on the punishment, but Allah will never break His promise. And verily, a day with thy Lord is *sometimes* as a thousand years of your reckoning.²⁴⁷⁷

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ
وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

^a 12 : 110; 30 : 10; 35 : 45; 40 : 22; 47 : 11. ^b 26 : 205; 27 : 72; 29 : 54-55; 37 : 177; 51 : 15.

(2) it became empty and untenanted (Aqrab).
See also 2 : 260.

معطلة (deserted) is derived from عطل. They say عطل الشيئ (atṭala) i.e. he rendered the thing untended or neglected. عطل البئر means, he gave up going to the well to drink from it. عطل الابل means, the camels went away without a pastor to look after them (Aqrab). وإذا العشار عطلت means, and when the she-camels ten-months pregnant are abandoned or are left without a pastor to look after them (81 : 5).

مشيد (lofty) means, lofty, strongly or firmly built. See also 4 : 79.

2476. Commentary :

The verse exhorts disbelievers to study the histories of and to learn a lesson from the fate of those people who rejected the former Prophets. It is also clear from this verse that the dead, the blind and the deaf spoken of here and elsewhere in the Qur'an are the spiritually blind, deaf and dead. See also 17 : 73.

2477. Commentary :

The reference in this verse is to a mighty event in the history of Islam. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the first three centuries of Islam would be its best period after which falsehood would spread and a period of darkness would come and this period of darkness would extend to over a thousand years. (Tirmidhi). This period is likened to one day in the present verse and in 32 : 6. In this period of moral and spiritual decadence of Muslims a people having blue eyes were to arise who were to spread all over the earth and at whose hands Islam was destined to receive a serious set-back (20:103-104). This period of political decadence of Islam and moral degeneration of Muslims in which they met with defeat and discomfiture at the hands of Western Christian nations having blue eyes, began after the expiry of the third century of Hijra and lasted up to the dawn of the 14th century when the Promised Messiah made his appearance. It is to these Western people that the reference has been made in the words

49. And how many a city there is to which I gave respite, while it was given to wrongdoing. Then I seized it, and unto Me is the return.²⁴⁷⁸

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَمَلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ
أَخَذْتُهَا ۖ وَإِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ۝٣٩

7 50. Say, 'O mankind, 'I am but a plain Warner to you.'²⁴⁷⁹

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُم نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝٤٠

51. Those who believe and do good works, ^bfor them is forgiveness and an honourable provision.²⁴⁸⁰

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَ
رِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝٤١

° 26 : 116; 29 : 51; 51 : 51; 67 : 27. ° 8 : 75; 24 : 27; 34 : 5.

“And they ask thee to hasten on the punishment.” In their conceit and arrogance born of material glory and political power, the Western peoples came to labour under the misconception that their progress and glory would last for ever. So they are depicted in the verse under comment as challenging the Holy Prophet to hasten on the punishment which he said would overtake them. To their implied taunt and gibe, the verse makes a reply that God had already made a promise that these Western nations would be granted respite for one thousand years after which a terrible tribulation would overtake them and all their greatness and glory would become a thing of the past. Divine punishment would descend on their houses and the very soil on which they would be living would be rendered bleak and barren. They are warned that the punishment would be so severe, overwhelming and enveloping that one day of it would appear to them as a thousand years. See also 18 : 9 & 32 : 6.

2478. Commentary :

The verse is of general application but it

specially alludes to the punishment in store for the peoples mentioned in the preceding verses.

2479. Commentary :

The verse refers to the universality of the Message of Islam. The Holy Prophet was sent for the whole of mankind and the Qur'ān is humanity's infallible guide till the end of time.

2480. Important Words :

كريم (excellent) is derived from كرم which means, it was or became highly esteemed or prized or valued, excellent, precious or rare. كرمته means, his land became productive or fertile. كرائم المال are such as are held in high estimation ; precious or excellent of cattle or other possessions ; the choicest or best thereof. كريم which is contrary of لئيم, means, generous ; liberal ; honourable ; noble, high-born (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words “honourable provision,” cover both physical and spiritual sustenance.

52. But "those who strive against Our Signs, seeking to frustrate *Our purpose*—these shall be the inmates of the Fire.²⁴⁸¹

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. Never sent We a Messenger or a Prophet before thee, but when he sought *to attain his object*, Satan put *obstacles* in the way of what he sought after. But Allah removes *the obstacles* that are placed by Satan. Then Allah firmly establishes His Signs. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.²⁴⁸²

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا
إِذَا تَنَسَّىٰ آلُ الشَّيْطَانِ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا
يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكُمُ اللَّهُ آيَتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

“ 34 : 6, 39.

2481. Commentary :

It is writ large on the pages of the history of all religions that in spite of all the ups and downs through which truth has to pass, it triumphs in the long run. The enemies of truth have never been able to impede its onward march. They cannot frustrate the Divine plan that truth must prevail.

2482. Important Words :

تمنى الشئى (he sought or desired to obtain).
means, he desired the thing. تمنى الرجل means, the man lied. تمنى الكتاب means, he read or recited the book. (أمانى - plural) means, what is desired ; a lie ; an object of wish (Aqrah).

Commentary :

This verse has been subjected to much conjecture and speculation by some ignorant and careless Commentators and has been deliberately misinterpreted and its meaning purposely distorted by prejudiced Christian writers. It is said that one day at Mecca when the

Holy Prophet recited the Quranic verse, *i.e.* أفرايتم اللات والعزى و مناة الثالثة الأخرى “now tell me about Lāt and ‘Uzzā, and Manāt, the third one, another goddess” (53 : 21), Satan put in his mouth the words تلك الغرائب *i.e.* these are exalted goddesses and their intercession is hoped for. They call it the ‘lapse of Muḥammad’ or his ‘compromise with idolatry.’ In fact the Holy Prophet never made any compromise with idolatry nor was there any lapse on his part. The lapse, if any, occurred in the minds of these hostile critics of Islam. It is a case of wish being father to the thought. These people are always on the lookout to discover a lapse in the Holy Prophet and when they find none, they invent one and impute it to him.

They say that the verse under comment refers to the above incident. We shall deal at length with the whole episode when we come to the relevant verse *i.e.* 53 : 21. Suffice it here to say that the whole story is belied by the fact that 53rd Chapter was, according to consensus of

scholarly opinion, revealed in the 5th year of the Call at Mecca while the present *Sūra* was revealed at Medina or on the eve of his departure from Mecca. It is inconceivable that God should have waited for eight long years to refer in this verse to that incident. Moreover, the story has been rejected as totally unfounded by all learned Commentators of the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr, being one of them. It appears to have been based on some reports narrated by Wāqidī, whom all competent authorities regard as quite untrustworthy. It seems strange that the utterance of this blasphemy should have been attributed to that great and uncompromising iconoclast *i.e.* the Holy Prophet, whose whole life was spent in denouncing and condemning idolatry and idol-worship. Besides this the whole context of 53 : 21 belies this story. The verses preceding and succeeding 53 : 21 contain an unsparing denunciation of idolatry. In fact the whole *Sūra* (53) is a condemnation of شرک (idol-worship).

Moreover, there is nothing in the words of the verse itself to warrant the forging of such a blatant lie. The meaning of the verse is quite clear. It purports to say that whenever a Prophet desires to attain his object, *i.e.* whenever he preaches the message of truth and desires that Divine Unity may be established on earth,

Satan places all sorts of obstacles and impediments in his way, *i.e.* wicked people seek to retard the progress of truth by putting all sorts of obstacles in the way of the Prophet. They wish to see his mission fail. But they cannot frustrate the Divine plan and God removes all those impediments and makes the cause of truth prevail and triumph. This meaning of the verse is quite simple and clear and is in perfect harmony with the text. The words "But Allah removes the obstacles placed by Satan," lend powerful support to this meaning. The verse is of general import. What it refers to happens in the case of every Prophet. There is no warrant for suggesting that the verse applies exclusively to the Holy Prophet. History too supports the view that the verse is of general application. In their impatience to find fault with the Holy Prophet, however, hostile Christian writers have singled him out, and, misinterpreting the verse, have attributed a supposed lapse to him.

Moreover, it is wrong to suggest, as some Commentators have done, that it is possible for Satan to interfere with the purity of the Quranic revelation. God has taken upon Himself to protect and safeguard it against all interference and interpolation. See also 15 : 10 & 72 : 27-29.

54. *He permits this* that He may make *the obstacles* which Satan puts *in the way of the Prophets* a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hardened—and surely, the wrongdoers are gone far *in error*—²⁴⁸³

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَٱلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُم وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. And that “those to whom knowledge has been given may know that it is the truth from thy Lord, so that they may believe therein and their hearts may be humble unto Him. And surely, Allah guides those who believe to the right path.”²⁴⁸⁴

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا ٱلْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهَادِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

^a 13 : 20 ; 34 : 7 ; 35 : 32 ; 47 : 3 ; 56 : 96.

2483. Commentary :

This verse also supports the interpretation we have placed on the preceding verse. There is absolutely no warrant for such a baseless story as some ignorant Commentators have taken into their heads to forge in connection with it, *i.e.* the preceding verse. The verse under comment means to say that satanic people seek to place all sorts of obstacles in the way of the mission of a Prophet, so that the progress of the Faith may be retarded and “those in whose hearts is a disease” may be misled. But God removes all such obstacles and after initial and temporary set-backs truth marches on its course of uniform progress. Thus the Prophets of God are faced with trials and tribulations so that sincere believers may be differentiated and separated from insincere hypocrites.

The words, “in whose hearts is a disease,”

refer to the hypocrites, who always stand on an edge, as it were, between truth and falsehood (22 : 12). They are always on the look-out to join the party whose cause they see triumphing. The words, “those whose hearts are hardened,” refer to those inveterate disbelievers whose hearts become hardened on account of persistent denial of truth.

2484. Commentary :

This verse also supports our interpretation of v. 53 above. It means to say that Satan puts obstacles in the way of a Prophet so that Allah may make it “a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hardened,” and “that those to whom knowledge has been given may know that it is the truth from the Lord, so that they believe therein.” These are the two objects which the satanic activities of the enemies of truth become the means of serving.

56. And those who disbelieve will not cease "to be in doubt about it until the Hour comes suddenly upon them or there comes to them the punishment of a destructive day."²⁴⁸⁵

وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتَّى
تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٌ

عَقِيمٌ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. ^bThe Kingdom on that day shall be Allah's. He will judge between them. So ^cthose who believe and do good deeds will be in Gardens of Bliss.²⁴⁸⁶

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٥٧﴾

^a 11 : 18. ^b 6 : 74; 25 : 27. ^c 13 : 30; 14 : 24; 18 : 31; 30 : 16; 68 : 35; 78 : 32-37.

2485. Important Words :

عقيم (destructive) is derived from عقم . They say عقت المرأة i.e. the woman was or became barren. امرأة عقيم means, a barren woman, a woman that does not conceive or give birth to a child. حرب عقيم means, a severe fighting. يوم عقيم means, a day having no day after it ; a destructive day, a day of hard fighting, so called because many women having lost their sons in the fighting become عقيم (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

"Hour" in the verse signifies the final triumph of Islam. It may also refer to the fall of Mecca, when the power of the disbelieving Quraish was finally broken. The fall took place quite suddenly. The Quraish had not had the least inkling of the approach of Muslim army till it reached the very gates of Mecca.

The words, "the punishment of a destructive day," may refer to any form of punishment, preferably to the day of the battle of Badr.

This and the following two verses imply a prophecy about the ultimate triumph of Islam, and the defeat and discomfiture of disbelievers.

2486. Commentary :

Besides being of general application the verse may particularly refer to the fall of Mecca. On that day the Kingdom of God became established in Arabia and idolatry departed from its stronghold never to return, and Divine Judgment was pronounced in the words, "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Falsehood does indeed vanish away fast" (17 : 82).

The words, "Gardens of Bliss" may refer to the fertile lands of Iraq, Syria and Egypt which after the conquest of Arabia fell to the victorious arms of the Muslims.

Here as also in 25 : 27 it is said that "The Kingdom on that day will be Allah's." In 1 : 4 it is stated, "Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgment" and in 3 : 27, "He is the Lord of Sovereignty." So God as represented by Islam is not only ملك (Malik) meaning King, but He is also مالك (Mālik) i.e. Master and even مالك الملك which signifies that He is such a King that He has complete possession, and undisputed and undivided ownership of all those things of which He is the Master.

58. But "those who disbelieve and reject Our Signs, will have an humiliating punishment."²⁴⁸⁷

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ۝

R. 8 59. "And those who leave their homes for the cause of Allah, and are then slain or die, Allah will surely provide for them a goodly provision. And surely, Allah is the Best of providers."²⁴⁸⁸

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ
مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكُنَّ
خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ۝

^a 2: 40; 7: 37; 30: 17; 57: 20; 64: 11; 78: 22-27. ^b 3: 196; 8: 75; 9: 20-22; 16: 42.

2487. Commentary :

There could have been no greater and more humiliating and ignominious punishment for the enemies of the Holy Prophet than the fall of their capital which placed the whole of Arabia at the feet of him whom they had turned out from his native town, putting a price on his head. Eventual defeat and destruction is the inevitable lot of falsehood and its votaries.

2488. Commentary :

In v. 57 above God had referred to the reward of believers in general. In this and the next verse the Qur'ān particularly mentions the reward of those believers who left their hearths and homes, their belongings and their dear and near ones for the sake of God. To these "living" martyrs, the verse holds out a promise that they will be specially rewarded for their sacrifices. In fact those who leave their homes and all that is dear to them for the sake of God and spend their lives in serving His cause and then die in harness deserve to be classed with "the martyrs", for their sacrifice is as great

as that of the actual martyrs, only, God in His infallible wisdom, spares their lives. This is the significance of the words, "or die". In fact there are two categories of martyrs—"the dead martyrs" and "the living martyrs". The "dead" martyrs are actually slain in the cause of God while the "living" martyrs live a life of perpetual sacrifice for His sake and then die a natural death. The verse under comment places both these classes of "martyrs" in the same category. Those who are slain, or those who die a natural death, serving the cause of God, will have the same reward—a goodly provision and a place with which they will be well pleased.

Incidentally, the verse shows that it was revealed after the Hijra, because it was after the Hijra that fighting in self-defence was permitted and some of the Muslims were killed in the fighting. In fact, some parts of the *Sūra* were revealed at Mecca and others at Medina. The *Sūra* may thus be said to have been revealed both at Mecca and Medina.

60. He will surely cause them to enter a place with which they will be well pleased. And Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Forbearing.²⁴⁸⁹

يُدْخِلُهُمْ مَدْخَلًا يَرْضَوْنَهُ ط وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ
حَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. That *shall be so*. And whoso retaliates with the like of that with which he has been afflicted and is then transgressed against, Allah will surely help him. Allah is indeed the Effacer of sins *and is Forgiving*.²⁴⁹⁰

ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِنُكْلٍ مَّا عُوِّقَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ
عَلَيْهِ لَنِصْرَتُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ ﴿٦١﴾

2489. Important Words :

أَدْخَلَ is pass. part. noun from أدخل. They say أدخله i.e. he made him enter. It is used as syn. with إدخال (to make one enter) and also as a noun of place and time (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that those who left their homes for the sake of God will be made to live in a place which they will like and the manner of their entering the place will also be so honourable that they will be highly pleased with it.

The words, "And Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Forbearing," signify that Allah knows full well the sincerity with which they serve the cause of truth, so while rewarding them He will overlook their shortcomings and faults.

2490. Commentary :

The verse has two-fold significance. It holds out a promise of help to Muslims and also implies a prophecy about their eventual success. In the former sense it purports to say that the Muslims have been oppressed and transgressed against. They may retaliate but their retaliation should not exceed legitimate bounds. The injury they should inflict on the enemy should not be greater than the injury they have received.

But the fear that the enemy being more powerful would inflict greater injury on them if they retaliated, should not deter them from retaliating. In that event they would be entitled to help and protection from God and would receive it in ample measure.

According to the second meaning Muslims are told that they are going to have their enemies in their power and they will be perfectly justified in inflicting as much injury on them as they had received from them but it would be far better if in the hour of victory and success they pardoned and forgave them, imitating the Divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness.

Incidentally, four very sound principles are deducible from this verse : (a) Muslims can and should fight in self-defence if they are attacked ; but in no case should they take the initiative in attacking. (b) If they retaliate, their retaliation should be proportionate to the wrong done to them ; they are not allowed to inflict a greater injury. (c) If they inflicted greater injury than the injury they had received, then they would be condemned as transgressors and would forfeit God's help and protection. (d) If the party on whom punishment has been inflicted for the wrong it had done seeks again to attack the retaliators, it shall be regarded as guilty of further aggression.

62. That *system of punishment and reward operates* because "Allah causes the night to enter into the day, and causes the day to enter into the night, and because Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."²⁴⁹¹

63. That is because ^bit is Allah Who is the Truth, and that which they call on beside Him is falsehood, and because Allah is the High, the Great.²⁴⁹²

64. Hast thou not seen that ^cAllah sends down water from the sky and the earth becomes green? Allah is indeed the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware.²⁴⁹³

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ
النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٢﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً زَفْضُجُ
الْأَرْضِ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a 31 : 30 ; 35 : 14 ; 57 : 7. ^b 20 : 115 ; 23 : 117 ; 24 : 26. ^c 22 : 6 ; 30 : 51 ; 35 : 28 ; 39 : 22 ; 45 : 6.

It should be noted that the verse does not speak of individual retaliation. It is retaliation on national or government basis. Individuals are not allowed to take the law into their own hands for the redress of any wrong. They should have recourse to the properly constituted authorities.

The verse should be read in conjunction with vv. 39, 40 above which deal with the basic and principal subject of the *Sūra* i.e., Jihād.

2491. Commentary :

The word النهار (day) in the verse represents power and prosperity and الليل (night) signifies the loss of power combined with decline and decadence. The verse uses this metaphor to point to the fact hinted at in the preceding verse that the night of misery and oppression to which Muslims were subjected for so long was about to pass away and the day of their glory and might was about to dawn. The verse further consoles and comforts the oppressed Muslims that God is not oblivious of their troubles.

From Him nothing is hidden and He hears their prayers.

2492. Commentary :

The metaphor of the last verse is continued in the present verse. It purports to say that Muslims will grow and prosper because God is Truth. He has revealed the truth which the Muslims follow and practise. Islam has come to stay because it is the Truth and truth is invincible while falsehood is perishable.

The words "Allah is the High, the Great" signify that it is impossible that a Dispensation established by God should fail, as this would constitute a serious reflection on His Greatness and Glory.

2493. Commentary :

The verse draws the attention of disbelievers to the natural phenomenon that is unfolding itself before their very eyes. Do they not see, it purports to say, that Divine rain has fallen

65. "To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."²⁴⁹⁴

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ^{١٥}

- 9 66. Hast thou not seen that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His command? And He withholds the rain from falling on the earth save by His leave. Surely, Allah is Compassionate and Merciful to men.²⁴⁹⁵

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلَ
تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ
عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ
رَحِيمٌ^{١٦}

^a 2 : 256; 10 : 56; 31 : 27. ^b 16 : 15; 35 : 13.

on the bleak, barren and dead land of Arabia and that it has begun to vibrate with new life and there is verdure and greenness all over it *i.e.*, there is spiritual awakening all over the country and Islam has taken deep roots? It will now grow and expand and prevail over all false Faiths.

2494. Commentary :

The theme of the previous verse is continued in this verse, *viz.*, Islam will prosper and make vast conquests because God Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent it and He is at its back. God has willed that His Kingdom shall be established in the earth and His worship shall take the place of the worship of false deities. He has decreed that His glory shall be extolled and His praises sung in the world because He is worthy of all praise.

2495. Commentary :

The verse constitutes a beautiful commentary on the futility of idol-worship and gives two very

strong arguments against it. First, God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has subjected all that is in the earth, in the sea and even in the air to the service of man. It is this Lord of all life Who is entitled to our worship and not the idols of wood and stone or those of man's own fancy. Secondly, when God has pressed the whole universe into the service of man and has made him the lord of the whole creation and His own chief handiwork, it is foolish on his part to degrade himself so low as to worship anything besides God.

The verse possesses another significance. The realization that all things are created for the service of man draws our attention to the uses and properties of different objects and urges us to study them and then turn them to our benefit. It is this study of natural objects that led to new discoveries and inventions and consequently to the great material progress which the early Muslims made in the hey-day of their intellectual glory.

67. "And He it is Who gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then will He give you life *again*. Surely, man is most ungrateful."²⁴⁹⁶

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. For every people have We appointed ways of worship which they observe ; so let them not dispute with thee in the matter ; and call thou *the people* to thy Lord, for surely, thou followest the right guidance."²⁴⁹⁷

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُكَ
فِي الْأَمْرِ وَاذْعُرْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٨﴾

^a 2 : 29 ; 16 : 71 ; 30 : 41 ; 40 : 69.

2496. Commentary :

The verse speaks of another Divine favour. God gave us life, then He will cause us to die and then will He give us a new life again. Death has been mentioned here as a Divine boon because it is the door through which man passes to a fuller life, which is eternal and is of growing and unending progress. That life which knows no end is described here by the words *ثم يحييكم* i.e., then will He give you life again. In yet another sense death is a great Divine blessing. If there had been no death, human life would have become intolerable and there would have been disorder, confusion and chaos on earth.

The words, "then He will cause you to die, then will He give you life," further signify that the process of life and death continues simultaneously. Every death is followed by and brings the message of a new life. A few Muslims killed at the battlefields of Badr, Uḥad, etc., brought about the spiritual resurrection of the whole of Arabia.

2497. Important Words :

منسك (ways of worship) means, rites of sacrifice ; religious rites and ceremonies of the

Pilgrimage ; animals of sacrifice ; ways of worship ; acts of devotion. See also 6 : 163 & 22 : 35.

Commentary :

Taking *منسك* in the sense of animals of sacrifice or the rites of sacrifice the verse signifies (a) that the ritual of sacrifice in one form or another is common to all religions ; and (b) that it was the sacrifice of animals that was at first enjoined by God and not human sacrifice which was invented afterwards.

Taking the word *منسك* in the sense of 'ways of worship,' the verse means that Divine worship is found in one form or another among all nations and peoples. This fact leads to another great truth which Islam, among all religions, was the first to proclaim, viz., that Divine Messengers appeared at different times among all nations and peoples to teach them the different forms and ways of worship.

The words *في الامر* (in the matter) mean, 'in the matter of Islam' or 'in the matter of the Qur'ān.' In this sense of the words the verse purports to say that when it has been made clear that Prophets were raised among all peoples,

69. And if they contend with thee, say, 'Allah knows best what you do.'²⁴⁹⁸

70. "Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection, concerning that about which you differ."²⁴⁹⁹

71. Dost thou not know that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth? Surely, it is *all preserved* in a Book, and that is easy for Allah.

72. "And they worship beside Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and that of which they have no knowledge. And for the wrongdoers there is no helper."²⁵⁰⁰

وَإِنْ جَدَلُواكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧١﴾

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٢﴾

^a 2 : 114 ; 4 : 142. ^b 20 : 8 ; 27 : 66 ; 49 : 17. ^c 7 : 72 ; 12 : 41 ; 53 : 24.

the disbelievers have no right or justification to say that the Holy Prophet has brought a novel teaching. He has done no new thing and has introduced no innovation. See 46 : 10.

2498. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that if in spite of the fact that Divine Prophets appeared among all nations and the advent of the Holy Prophet was not an innovation and in spite of the irrefutable arguments and innumerable Signs that God had shown in his favour, the disbelievers prefer to doubt and dispute the truth of his mission, then let them wait and see what the future has in store for them and what evil consequences their rejection of the truth will lead to.

2499. Commentary :

The argument commenced in the preceding verse is continued here. If the disbelievers, the verse purports to say, persist in their rejection

of truth, God will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection *i.e.*, the day of the triumph of Islam and of the discomfiture and destruction of disbelief.

2500. Commentary :

Three arguments have been given in this verse in support of belief in the Unity of God and against idolatry : (a) There is to be found no authority in any revealed Book for idol-worship ; (b) human reason and conscience are against it and idolaters can give no sound argument based on their personal experience and observation in support of it and (c) in the struggle during the ages between idolaters and believers, the latter have invariably come off triumphant. Thus Divine revelation, human reason and the verdict of history are all against idolatry. This is a truth writ large on the history of all religions.

73. "And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, thou wilt notice a denial on the faces of those who disbelieve. They would well-nigh attack those who recite Our Signs to them. Say, ^b"Shall I tell you of something worse than that? *It is the Fire!* Allah has promised it to those who disbelieve. And a vile destination it is!"²⁵⁰¹

وَإِذَا تُلِّىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الشُّكْرُ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ بِالَّذِينَ
يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا قُلْ أَفَأَنْتُمْ كُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ
ذَلِكَ النَّارُ وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَبُئْسَ

ع الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣٩﴾

- 10 74. O men, a similitude is set forth, so listen to it. "Surely, those on whom you call instead of Allah cannot create even a fly, though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they cannot recover it therefrom. Weak indeed are *both* the seeker and the sought."²⁵⁰²

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٍ فَاسْتَبِعُوا لَهُ^١ إِنْ
الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا
وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ^٢ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا
لَّا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ^٣ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٤٠﴾
مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾

75. ^aThey esteem not Allah with the estimation which is His due. Surely, Allah is Powerful, Mighty.²⁵⁰³

^a 17 : 47 ; 23 : 67-68 ; 39 : 46. ^b 5 : 61. ^c 6 : 72 ; 16 : 21. ^d 6 : 92 ; 39 : 68.

2501. Important Words :

يسطون (would attack) is formed from سطا . They say سطا به او عليه i.e. he sprang or rushed upon him and overpowered him ; he made an assault or attack upon him. سطا الفرس means, the horse went at random or in a headlong manner, not obeying guidance; he went with wide step or raised his tail in running. سطا الماء means, the water was or became abundant (Lane & Aqrab).

2502. Commentary :

The verse brings home to disbelievers the utter powerlessness and helplessness of their gods and their own folly in worshipping them. Their gods, it says, have no control over crea-

tion. They cannot create anything, not even a fly. Let alone creating anything — a worm, a fly, they do not possess even the power to recover from a fly anything which it snatches away from them, so weak are these gods and such hopeless idiots are their votaries !

2503. Commentary :

The fact that idolaters degrade themselves so low as to worship idols shows that they have a very poor conception of the powers and attributes of the Almighty God, the Great Creator. In fact all polytheistic beliefs and idolatrous ideas spring from this poor conception of God's powers and attributes being limited and

76. Allah chooses *His* Messengers from among angels, and from among men. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.²⁵⁰⁴

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٥٦﴾

77. "He knows what is before them and what is behind them ; and to Allah shall *all* affairs be returned for decision."²⁵⁰⁵

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٧﴾

78. O ye who believe ! ^bbow down and prostrate yourselves in Prayer, and worship your Lord, and do good deeds that you may prosper.²⁵⁰⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا
رَبَّكُمْ وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

^a 2 : 256 ; 27 : 66 ; 49 : 17.

^b 3 : 44 ; 41 : 38 ; 96 : 20.

defective like those of man. The essential characteristics of a Being Who demands and is entitled to our worship are (a) that He should be قوی i.e. He should have the power to create ; and (b) that He should be عزیز i.e. He should have complete control over the whole creation. Both these attributes, the idols of the polytheists utterly lack.

2504. Commentary :

The verse gives another argument to bring home to idolaters the stupidity and uselessness of idol-worship. The idolaters, it says, take angels and men for gods, while the angels themselves are only the bearers of Divine messages, and the highest spiritual status to which man can rise is only that of Messengership. It is foolish therefore, to worship beings who are no more than mere instruments of conveying Divine will to mankind.

2505. Commentary :

The verse implies that the great boon of prophethood is bestowed only on those who are

fitted to receive it and discharge its great responsibilities. The words, "what is before them and what is behind them," may signify the attributes and qualities they already possess and those which they later on develop.

2506. Important Words :

اركعوا (bow down) is derived from ركع which means, he bowed down, his condition became lowered or abased. ركعت النخلة means, the palm-tree inclined. ركع الى الله means he completely turned towards God and leaned upon Him, he humbled himself to Him, and found peace of mind in Him. The word راكم as used by the Arabs meant, one who worshipped God alone to the exclusion of all sorts of idols and images (Asās). The famous pre-Islamic poet Nābigha says :

سيميل عذراً او نجاحاً من امرى
الى ربه رب البريه راكم

i.e. he who turns to God alone, the Creator of the world, will have a sound argument in his favour and will obtain salvation (Lane & Aqrab).

79. "And strive in the cause of Allah as it behoves *you* to strive for it. He has chosen you, and has laid no hardship upon you in religion; ^bso follow the faith of your father Abraham; He named you Muslims *both* before and in this *Book*, ^cso that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over mankind. Therefore observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Master. An excellent Master and an excellent Helper! ²⁵⁰⁷

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ
وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ
أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ هَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ
مَوْلَاكُمْ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ۝٩

^a 9 : 41. ^b 2 : 136 ; 16 : 124. ^c 2 : 144 ; 16 : 90.

Commentary :

The verse points to the following four means which it is very essential to adopt for attaining spiritual eminence and success and prosperity in life : (a) To possess firm, sincere and unadulterated faith in God. This is the meaning of the word آمَنُوا. (b) To have full and complete reliance and dependence on God and to renounce all unfair and doubtful means for the attainment of one's object. This is the significance of ارْكَعُوا. (c) To give unquestioning obedience to God's commandments and unqualified submission to His will, and to develop in oneself Divine attributes so as to become God's own manifestation. This is the import and purport of the expression وَاَعْبُدُوا. (d) To do righteous deeds and serve mankind (وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ). Thus this brief verse covers the entire extent and scope of the ways and means that lead to material and moral progress.

2507. Important Words :

جاهدوا (strive) is derived from جَاهَدَ. They say

جَاهَدَ فِي الْأَمْرِ i.e. he did his utmost, took extraordinary pains, he employed himself vigorously in prosecuting the affair. جَاهَدَ دَابَّتَهُ means, he fatigued the beast or burdened the beast beyond its power. جَاهَدَ means, he exerted his utmost power in contending with an object of his disapprobation. جَاهَدَ الْعَدُوَّ means, he fought with the enemy imposing upon himself distress or exerting his utmost power or ability to repel him. جَاهَدَ or مَجَاهَدَ are infinitives from جَاهَدَ (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The word جَاهَدَ has been used in two senses in the Qur'ān with a slight change, viz., جَاهَدَ فِي جِهَادٍ i.e. striving hard in the cause of Allah, used in several verses of the Qur'ān and جَاهَدَ جِهَادًا, literally meaning striving hard in Allah, as used in the present verse and in 29 : 70. As it appears from the latter two verses جِهَادٌ فِي اللَّهِ signifies striving hard to win the pleasure and nearness of God while جِهَادٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ signifies the waging of war against the enemies of truth.

Thus **جهاد في الله** seems to possess a higher spiritual significance than **جهاد في سبيل الله**.

Jihād is of three kinds : (a) Jihād against one's baser self, *i.e.* against one's evil desires and propensities or Jihād against Satan and (b) Jihād against the enemies of truth which includes fighting in self-defence. These two kinds of Jihād may be termed **جهاد في الله** and the third kind of Jihād may be called **جهاد في سبيل الله**. The Holy Prophet has termed the first two kinds of Jihād as **جهاد اكبر** (the greater Jihād) and the third kind of Jihād as **جهاد اصغر** (the smaller Jihād). Once when he was returning from fighting he is reported to have said: **رجعتم من الجهاد الاصغر الى الجهاد الاكبر** *i.e.* you have returned from the smaller Jihād (fighting against the enemies of Islam) to the greater Jihād (waging war against one's baser self) (Khaṭīb). According to Imām Rāghib, the words **جاهدوا في الله حق جهاده** include all the three forms of Jihād. The words **جاهدوا في الله** may also include the propagation of Islam, as the words, "and He has laid no hardship upon you in religion," indicate. See also 2 : 219.

The words, "He has chosen you and has laid no hardship upon you in religion," show that while on the one hand it has been laid down as a sacred duty upon Muslims to preach their religion, on the other they signify that Islam is a simple, practical and practicable religion and there is nothing in its commandments which it is not easily possible for man to carry out. To this practicality and practicability of the Islamic ordinances pointed references have also been made in vv. 2 : 287 & 54 : 18. The words also show that the Law or *Shari'at* has not been revealed to impose a burden upon man as the Christians say but, on the contrary, to lighten his burdens and to break the chains and fetters

with which he has shackled himself and to uplift him morally and spiritually.

The words, "He named you Muslims before," refer to the following prophecy of the Bible :

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name..... And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen, and the Lord God shall slay thee ; and He shall call His servants by another name (Isaiah 62 : 2 & 65 : 15).

The allusion in the words " And in this Book " is to Abraham's prayer quoted in the Qur'ān, *viz.*, "Our Lord make us Muslims (submissive) to Thee and make our offspring a people submissive to Thee" (2 : 129). It is very significant that though in its essence the religion of all the Prophets of God was Islam, it was reserved for the religion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad to receive this proper name from God. As the religions preached and practised by the former Prophets were only an undeveloped and imperfect form of Islam they did not receive a proper name and were known after their own names. But as Islam, the eternal Faith, received its fullest development and completest consummation at the hands of the Holy Prophet, his religion was given this proper name. This is one of the many superiorities which the Holy Prophet possesses over other Prophets of God.

The words "He named you Muslims" possess another significance. The word 'Muslim' being from the root 'Islam' which means 'peace' ; a true Muslim is one who is at peace with God and man and is also at peace with himself. The Holy Prophet has given an apt definition of a Muslim in the following well-known ḥadīth :

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من يده ولسانه

i.e. a true Muslim is one from whose hands and

tongue other Muslims are safe (Bukhārī). It is indeed strange that a religion, whose very name means 'peace' and whose followers are enjoined to preach and practise peace, should have been stigmatized by hostile and ignorant critics as having brought fire and sword into the world, and should have been maligned as being indebted for its expansion and propagation to the swords and spears of its votaries ! Nothing could be farther from truth.

CHAPTER 23

AL-MU'MINŪN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Place and Date of Revelation

It can be said without fear of contradiction that the whole of this *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca. All authorities including Qurṭubī agree on this point. There seems to exist some difference of opinion about the exact number of the verses of this *Sūra*. The people of Baṣra regard it as 119. They count vv. 46 & 47 as two separate verses while the Kūfīs, who hold that these two verses constitute one verse, place the number of the verses of the *Sūra* at 118. We, however, hold that the number of the verses including the *Bismillah* is 119. At any rate there appears to exist no ground for some Christian writers to discover a plea to impugn the authenticity of the text of the Qur'ān on the basis of this slight difference of opinion. There is to be found complete unanimity among scholars that the whole text of the Qur'ān as it exists to-day is the revealed word of God and is completely immune from all human interference and interpolation. Thus a seeming difference in the number of the verses of this *Sūra* can cast no reflection on the reliability and authenticity of its text.

There is sufficient internal evidence to show that the *Sūra* was revealed towards the end of the Holy Prophet's stay at Mecca. Sayūṭī regards it as the last *Sūra* to be revealed at Mecca while some other Commentators assign its revelation to Medina. But not much weight is attached to this latter opinion. Wherry fixes sixth or seventh year of the Call as the time of its revelation. But the text of the *Sūra* and Islamic traditions contradict Wherry's assumption. The view however, seems to be more akin to reality that the *Sūra* was revealed towards the end of the Meccan period, just before Hijra, though actually it may not have been the last *Sūra* to be revealed at Mecca as Sayūṭī thinks.

Connection with the Preceding *Sūra*

In the closing verses of the last *Sūra* the believers were told to turn to God and obey His commandments as in this lay the secret of their future progress and prosperity. They were also enjoined to wage war with the sword so that those who drew the sword against Islam should themselves perish by the sword. They were further enjoined to strive in the way of the Lord with the Qur'ān. The alternative commandment of Jihād sometimes with the sword and at another time with the Qur'ān has made provision for both the contingencies. Neither were non-Muslims compelled to accept Islam by force nor were believers required to accept any commandment against their conscience. The believers were further told that Jihād with the Qur'ān meant that they should observe Prayers and give the Zakāt and hold fast to God and that if they acted upon these commandments, God would help them and vouchsafe to them success and prosperity.

Whereas the closing verses of the preceding *Sūra* had held out to the believers a conditional promise of success, in the present *Sūra* a sure guarantee is given that a community of believers will certainly be born who, because they will fulfil the above-mentioned conditions, will achieve success. Thus a thing which was only presumed to have existed is claimed in this *Sūra* to have come into being as an actual fact.

The subject-matter of this *Sūra* makes a little digression from that of the preceding few *Sūrās*. Those *Sūrās* contained a summary of the teaching of Christianity and rejected what was unacceptable in it and corrected and amended where corrections and amendments were found necessary. This *Sūra*, too, embodies a repudiation of the false doctrines and teachings of Christianity, but at the same time makes a pointed and emphatic reference to the fact that the whole Christian system has been replaced by Islam, which by removing all interpolations and false ideas that had found their way into it, will now guide mankind to its destined goal.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with the glad tidings to the true believers that the time of their success and prosperity has already arrived, and then proceeds to give a brief description of their characteristics and special marks, *i.e.* they worship their Lord with a humble heart ; they refrain from all such actions as do no good to themselves or their community ; they are ever ready to undergo all sorts of sacrifice for the sake of their country ; they shut all those avenues through which evil thoughts find access to the human heart, particularly they guard their chastity ; they faithfully discharge their responsibilities and fulfil their covenants and pledges with other peoples ; they are specially regardful of congregational Prayers, *i.e.* they promote and foster national feelings among the members of their community and subordinate individual requirements to national needs. These are the people who will get the Paradise promised to them in this world and will enjoy God's eternal and everlasting favours in the life to come.

This, in a nutshell, is the process of the spiritual growth and development of believers. It is followed by a brief but beautiful description of the growth of the human foetus and defines the different stages through which the child passes—from the stage of a drop of sperm to that of a fully developed human being. The *Sūra* then proceeds to explain that just as every physical birth is followed by death and resurrection, similarly nations or communities among whom at one time a spiritual renaissance takes place, at another time are subject to decay and decadence and in due course are succeeded by another people. In fact spiritual and physical developments bear a close resemblance. Both of them have to pass through seven stages of development. Next, the *Sūra* develops the theme, *viz.*, that all things are sent down into the world according to a determined measure and each continues to exist and is afforded protection till an appointed time. When at last it has served its purpose it decays and dies. In the same way the Divine teachings, sent down before the Qur'ān, died when they had served their intended purpose. Thus the mere fact of a teaching being Divine does not entitle it to immunity from decay. It is only the Qur'ān which has been granted continuity of life and which will therefore provide spiritual food to all humanity for all time, because it is the last revealed Divine Law.

The *Sūra* then recounts some of the favours which God has bestowed upon man and which are necessary for his physical sustenance, and draws the moral lesson that when God has taken so much care to provide for man's physical needs, He must have taken equal, even greater, care to provide for his spiritual requirements.

Next, we are told that the most essential prerequisite to ensure spiritual progress is belief in the Unity of God which since the inception of the world the Prophets of God have taught and preached. But the enemies of truth have always protested that some superhuman being should have been sent by God for their guidance, but in spite of this persistent protest of disbelievers God has always commissioned only men to guide men, who in the face of determined and organized opposition and persecution succeeded in their mission. (It is a strange irony that before the advent of Jesus the disbelievers always demanded that a superhuman being, preferably an angel, should have been sent as a Messenger of God to guide them. How a mere mortal like them, they said, could arrogate to himself the position of being a Divine Messenger. In the time of Jesus, when he metaphorically said that he was son of God, they said that it was highly preposterous and blasphemous for a mere human being to claim to be son of God, and in the time of the Holy Prophet disbelievers said that a Prophet could not come from outside the House of Israel. In fact man in his perversity and waywardness always has found some foolish excuse to reject God's message).

The *Sūra* then deals at length with the subject of Divine Unity and says that Noah preached and propagated the oneness of God. After Noah came a galaxy of Prophets. All of them taught that God was One and those Divine Teachers who came after them also emphasized and stressed it. The devotees of darkness, however, always opposed and persecuted the Prophets. The result of the struggle between truth and falsehood invariably was that the believers were successful and those who disbelieved and rejected the Divine Messengers suffered defeat and came to grief. Then we are told that in course of time came Moses, the greatest Prophet of Israel, with Aaron his brother as his deputy, and they both gave the same teaching and were also successful in their mission. This is a phenomenon which has occurred again and again in the lives of God's great Messengers. From this it is quite clear that Unity of God is the basic doctrine of all religions which all Divine Messengers taught and upon which they laid the greatest stress. The *Sūra* further says that towards the end of the Mosaic Dispensation came Jesus, son of Mary. He also taught and laid very great stress on the Unity of God but his followers invented the false doctrine of his 'sonship.' Such a foolish doctrine, however, cannot be accepted as true against the combined testimony and teachings of all Divine Prophets, including Jesus himself. Next, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad is enjoined to observe ordinances and commandments of the *Sharī'at* like all other Prophets in the matter of food and in all other acts and to adapt and mould himself to God's perfect *Sharī'at*, because those who give up the right path are led away from Him.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that there have always existed differences among the followers of all religions but these differences are the result of lack of true knowledge and of heedlessness which takes hold of men after their Prophets leave the world. But such is not the case with true believers. They fear their Lord and believe in His Signs and have firm faith in His Unity and do good deeds to the best of their power, and yet consider themselves not to have fully discharged

their duties and responsibilities. They strive to vie with one another in doing good deeds. Man, however, is expected to act only to the best of his powers because "Allah does not burden any soul beyond its capacity." Then it is stated that though the Law of God is quite practical and practicable, the disbelievers refuse to act upon it and in their perversity and the pride of their power and wealth continue to indulge in luxury and vain pursuits till God's punishment overtakes them and they weep and wail, but then it is too late and their wailing and weeping is of no avail. They defy and reject Divine Messengers and call them madmen. But they are so foolish as not to understand this simple thing that if the Prophets had been madmen, they should not have succeeded in their missions but should have come to an ignominious end. On the contrary, all what they say and claim comes to pass. The fact is that in their heart of hearts disbelievers do not regard the Prophets as maniacs and madmen, on the contrary they entertain a creeping fear lest what the Prophets say may be fulfilled and they may be brought to book for their rejection of the Divine message.

The *Sūra* further says that God would have forgiven the transgressions of disbelievers but they have gone so far in mischief and iniquity that God's forgiveness would not be of any use to them but would only add to their wickedness. If the disbelievers should only reflect a little they would find that the very structure of the human body bears a strong testimony to the truth of God's Prophets and His Law and to the fact that there is only One Creator and One Controller of the whole universe and of every individual being, and yet they would not believe in Divine Unity. The truth is that God has no son, neither has He a partner in creating or controlling the universe. If He had one, the consummate and beautiful arrangement and order that pervades and permeates it would have gone to pieces.

Towards the end of the *Sūra* disbelievers are warned that they will be punished if they persisted in their rejection of the Divine Message, and the Holy Prophet is told that as punishment is sure to overtake disbelievers he should pray that at that dreadful hour he might be away from the scene of their destruction. He is further told that disbelievers would not desist from their evil course and would continue to indulge in iniquitous deeds till when the hour of punishment arrived they will beg and beseech that they might be granted one last opportunity to reform themselves. But then it would be too late, and they will realize that pain and punishment after a life of ease and comfort is doubly mortifying. In fact a single day of punishment appears to be much longer than a whole life of comfort and ease. The *Sūra* ends with stating the great spiritual truth that man is not created without a purpose. His life has a noble aim. He should not therefore doubt or dispute the truth of Divine Law and of God's Messengers and should realize that after the truth is made manifest he will have to render an account of his deeds to his Lord if he did not desist from the worship of false gods.

سُورَةُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٣)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²⁵⁰⁸

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Surely, success does come to the believers,²⁵⁰⁹

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ②

3. Who are humble in their Prayers,²⁵¹⁰

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ③

4. And ^bwho shun all that which is vain,²⁵¹¹

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ④

^a 1 : 1. ^b 25 : 73.

2508. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2509. Commentary :

By "the believers" in this verse are meant believers of a very high spiritual calibre whose characteristics and special marks have been mentioned in the following verses. The verse says that the believers will achieve فلاح *i.e.* success, and not that they will get نجاه *i.e.* salvation, because the achievement of فلاح (success), which is the object of one's life, is a much higher stage than the attainment of salvation or نجاه which only signifies getting rid of hardships and privations.

2510. Important Words :

خاشعون is the plural of خاشع which is act. part. from خشع which means, he was or became lowly, humble or submissive. They say خشعت الشمس *i.e.* the sun was about to set. خشع في صلاته means, he was humble in his prayer. خشوع which is infinitive noun from خشع generally signifies humility which is expressed by the movements of the

body while تضرع generally signifies humility of the heart. But these words are also used synonymously (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

With this verse begins a description of the conditions or prerequisites which a believer must fulfil before he aspires to attain success in life and achieve the supreme and sublime object for which God has created him. These conditions may be regarded as so many stages in the spiritual development and journey of man. The first stage or milestone in this journey of the soul is that a believer turns to God in all humility, overawed with Divine Majesty, and with a penitent heart and humbled soul.

2511. Important Words :

اللغو (that which is vain) is derived from لغا and signifies a vain, foolish, worthless or careless talk or speech or that which one utters without seriously meaning it; vain act or an act done carelessly or unthinkingly; deviation from the right path; foolish joking. It covers all vain and foolish thoughts. It is also used for the

5. And ^awho are active in paying the Zakāt,²⁵¹²

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

6. And ^bwho guard their chastity—²⁵¹³

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٦﴾

^a5 : 56 ; 9 : 71 ^b70 : 30

chirping of sparrows and the sound of other birds (Lane, Aqrab & Muḥit). See also 2 : 226.

Commentary :

The second stage in the spiritual journey of man consists in the avoidance of all vain talk and thoughts and also of idle, vain and futile actions. A true believer not only prays to God in the utmost humility of the heart but takes life very seriously. Life is a grim and serious fact and he takes it as such. He employs every moment of it usefully and shuns all vain and useless pursuits which are incapable of doing any good either to his own person or to his community or country. Incidentally, the avoidance of vain pursuits is the natural and inevitable result of humility in Prayer as is evident from another verse of the Qur'ān, viz., "Surely Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil" (29 : 46).

2512. Commentary :

This verse refers to the third rung of the spiritual ladder. The true believers not only turn to God with utmost humility of the heart and avoid all sorts of vanities and trivialities but actually engage themselves in pursuits that purify them, such as the spending of their valuable time and hard-earned money and employing all the natural capacities and abilities with which God has endowed them, in the cause of truth. They are prepared to undergo all manner of sacrifice. In v. 4 above, the believers are

mentioned as avoiding vain and useless things which is at best a negative virtue, and a negative virtue or good is not of a very high order. The present verse, however, points to a positive virtue which consists in the doing of good that should purify oneself and also benefit others and consists in giving money, which one has earned with the sweat of one's brow, in the way of God. This indeed is a great positive virtue. In fact Islam regards the share of the poor in the wealth of the rich as the inalienable right of the former and when a rich man discharges the debt that he owes to the poor by paying the Zakāt, he does no favour to anybody. He only gives what is due from him. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said : "Let no one imagine that his wealth or standing or power is the result merely of his own efforts or enterprise. That is not so. Your power and your position and your wealth are all earned through the poor" (Tirmidhi, *Abwāb al-Zuhd*).

The object of Zakāt is not only to provide means for the relief of the distressed or for the promotion of the welfare of the economically less favoured sections of the community but it is also to discourage the hoarding of money and commodities and thus to ensure a brisk circulation of both, resulting in healthy economic adjustments.

2513. Important Words :

فروجهم (their chastity) is the plural of فرج (farjun) which is derived from فرج (faraja).

7. "Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed ;²⁵¹⁴

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ۚ

^a 70 : 31

فرج الشيئ means, he opened the thing so as to make a gap or breach. فرج means, the pudendum or pudenda; the part or parts of a person which it is indecent to expose; or the external portion of the organs of generation of a man or a woman; an open, wide space; the part between the two sides of a valley, i.e. entrance; a frontier of access to a country (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

This verse refers to the fourth stage in the spiritual development of man. It indeed marks a very high stage. The lesson is writ large on the pages of history that many a nation has gone to rack and ruin because they abandoned themselves to immoral practices. Sexual morality plays a very important part in the building up of the national character of a people. Islam is very keen on this point. It regards the guarding of sexual chastity as one of the most sacred duties of a believer. It has closed the door to all those avenues which lead to moral laxity. The word فرج signifies those avenues through which evil thoughts find access to the human heart. It covers all parts and organs of the body, i.e. eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet etc. Islam looks with extreme disfavour upon all those practices which are calculated to excite human passions and which are so popular in the West or among people enamoured of western ways of life.

The verse marks a still higher stage in the spiritual development of man than the one

mentioned in v. 5 above. It seems much easier to spend one's money and property in the way of God, to which reference has been made in the preceding verse, than to overcome one's carnal passions when they once get excited. Man has suffered more from the gratification of his sensual appetites than perhaps from any other evil. The curbing of carnal desires requires a greater mental discipline than the spending of wealth in good causes.

2514. Important Words :

ما ملكت أيمانهم (what their right hands possess). يمين is the plural of أيمن which is derived from يمن يمين. They say الرجل يمين i.e. he came from the right hand of the man. يمن الله فلان means, God blessed such a one. يمين means, good luck; the right hand; power and strength; a covenant confirmed by an oath; a good position. They say عندنا باليمين i.e. such a one possesses high position with us. An Arab would say هذا ملك يميني i.e. he or it is in the possession of my right hand, meaning, he or it is in my possession (Lisān. & Aqrab). The expression ما ملكت أيمانهم generally signifies prisoners of war whether men or women, who are in the custody and control of their Muslim captors because they had taken part in a war which was waged to destroy Islam. The term has been used in the Qur'ān in preference to عباد and إماء (slaves and bondwomen) to point to a just and rightful possession. It includes both slaves and bondwomen, but it is only

the context which determines what the expression signifies in a particular place. See also 4 : 25.

Commentary :

Much misunderstanding prevails as to what the expression "their right hands possess" signifies, and what are the rights and status of the persons to whom it applies.

It should be clearly understood that Islam has condemned slavery in unequivocal terms. According to it, it is a mortal sin to deprive a person of his liberty by kidnapping him, *i.e.* to make him a slave, unless, of course, he renders himself liable to deprivation of it by taking part in a war waged to destroy Islam or an Islamic State. It is also a grievous sin to buy or sell slaves. All human beings as such are equal in the sight of God and enjoy equal human rights. Islamic teaching on this point is quite clear, unequivocal and emphatic. According to it a person who makes another person his slave commits a grave sin against God and man (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Ba'i* & Abū Dawūd as quoted by Faṭḥ al-Bārī). It is also worthy of note that when Islam came into the world slavery was a part and parcel of the human social system and there existed large number of slaves in every country. It was therefore not feasible, nor even wise, to abolish with a stroke of the pen, an institution which had become so inextricably interwoven into the whole texture of human society, without doing serious injury to its moral tone. Islam, therefore, sought to abolish it gradually but effectively and surely. The Qur'ān has laid down the following very sound principles for the speedy and complete abolition of slavery :

(1) Prisoners of war (*i.e.* ماملكت ايمانهم) can only be taken after a regular battle.

(2) They cannot be retained after the war is over.

(3) They are to be set free either as a mark of favour or by exchange of prisoners.

The Qur'ān says :

And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks ; and when you have overcome them ; bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either release them as a favour or by taking ransom—until the war lays down its arms. That is the ordinance (47 : 5).

Those unfortunate persons however, who, may fail to gain their freedom through any of these means, or should choose to remain with their Muslim masters can purchase it by entering into a contract called *mukātabat* (24 : 34). Now if a woman is taken prisoner in a war of the nature mentioned above and thus loses her liberty and becomes ملك يمين, and she fails to get her release by exchange of prisoners of war, and the exigencies of government also do not justify her immediate release as a mark of favour, nor do her own people or government get her ransomed and she does not even seek to buy her freedom by entering into *mukātabat* and her master, in the interest of morality marries her, whether she likes it or not, in what way, it may be asked, this arrangement can be regarded as objectionable and the great hue and cry raised over it as justified or justifiable.

Let it be clearly understood that as regards establishing sexual relations with a female prisoner of war or a slave-wife which is the real significance of the expression ماملكت ايمانهم used in the present verse, without first marrying her, neither this nor any other verse of the Qur'ān lends any support whatever. Not only does the

Qur'ān not give any sanction for the treatment of female prisoners of war as wives without first taking them into proper wedlock but there are clear and positive injunctions to the effect that these prisoners of war, like free women, should be married if they are to be treated as wives, the only difference between the two being a difference of social status inasmuch as prior consent of prisoners of war to their marriage is not considered necessary as in the case of free women. The fact that the expression *ماملكت أيمانهم* signifies female prisoners lends no support whatsoever to the untenable view that Islam has upheld and encouraged concubinage. Besides the present verse, at least in as many as four other verses of the Qur'ān, the injunction has been laid down in clear and unambiguous terms that female prisoners of war should not remain unmarried. These verses are as follows :

1. And marry widows from among you and your male-slaves and female-slaves who are fit for marriage (24 : 33).

2. And those of you who cannot afford to marry free believing women, let them marry what your right hands possess, namely your believing handmaids—so marry them with the leave of their masters and give them their dowries according to what is fair (4 : 26).

3. And if you fear that you will not be fair in dealing with the orphans, then marry of women as may be agreeable to you, two or three or four ; and if you fear you will not deal justly, then marry only one or (if you cannot afford to marry even one free wife then marry) what your right hands possess (4 : 4).

The verse may also be rendered as “then marry of women as may be agreeable to you two or three or four or what your right hands possess ;” the words “and if you fear you will not deal

justly, then marry only one,” forming a parenthetical clause. According to this rendering also slave-girls are to be married before they are treated as wives.

4. And marry not idolatrous women until they believe; even a believing bond-woman is better than an idolatrous woman, although she may highly please you (2 : 222); the sense being that a believing slave wife should be preferred to a non-believing free wife.

The Holy Prophet is also very explicit on this point. He is reported to have said, “He who has a slave girl, and gives her proper education and brings her up in a becoming manner and then frees and marries her, for him is double reward” (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-'Ilm*). This ḥadīth implies that if a Muslim wishes to have a slave girl as wife, he should first set her free and then marry her. The Holy Prophet's own practice was quite in harmony with his precept. Two of the Holy Prophet's wives, Jawairiya and Ṣafīyya, came to him as prisoners of war. They were his *ملك يمين*. But he married them according to Islamic Law. Māriya was sent to him by the King of Egypt. He also married her and she enjoyed the status of a free wife like his other wives. She observed “purdah” and was included among “the Mothers of the Faithful.”

Another verse of the Qur'ān, viz., *O Prophet We have made lawful to thee thy wives whom thou hast paid their dowries, and those whom thy right hand possesses from among those whom Allah has given thee as gains of war, and the daughters of thy paternal uncle, and the daughters of thy paternal aunts, and the daughters of thy maternal uncle, and the daughters of thy maternal aunts who have migrated with thee* (33 : 51), points to the fact that the commandment regarding

8. "But those who seek *anything* beyond that are the transgressors—

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٨﴾

70 : 32

marriage applies to ما ملكت أيمانكم (whom your right hands possess) as much as it does to daughters of the Holy Prophet's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. Both are to be legally wedded before they are treated as wives. All the three categories mentioned above were made lawful to the Holy Prophet through marriage.

The verse 4 : 25 viz., "And forbidden to you are married women, except such as your right hands possess," seems to present some difficulty. But in reality there is no such difficulty. The verse along with its predecessor deals with women whom it is unlawful for a man to marry and among these are included married women. But it makes one exception. Those married women who are taken prisoner in a religious war and then choose to remain with Muslims, can be married to their masters. The fact that they choose not to go to their former husbands is considered as tantamount to the annulment of their former marriage.

It may also be noted in passing that it is not permitted to take in marriage such female relations of a slave as correspond to the relations of a free woman within the prohibited degree. For instance, the mothers, sisters, daughters etc., of a slave wife cannot be taken in marriage. This also shows that the Quranic commandments with regard to marriage and in-laws apply as much to bondwomen as they apply to free women.

It may further be stated here that in view of circumstances obtaining at the time of its revelation the Qur'ān had to make a distinction between the social status of two classes of women. That distinction was expressed by the word زوج (a free woman taken in marriage) and ملك يمين (bondwoman taken in marriage). The former word connotes a sense of equality between husband and wife while the latter implies an inferior status of the wife. The Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, however, desired and encouraged that bondwomen should first be given full freedom and full status and then married as the Holy Prophet himself did.

Besides, Islam does not allow women taken prisoner in ordinary wars to be treated as wives. This exceptional injunction comes into operation only when a hostile nation wages a religious war against Islam in order to extirpate it and to compel Muslims to abandon their religion at the point of the sword and then treats their prisoners—men and women, as slaves, as was done in the time of the Holy Prophet. At that time the enemy took away Muslim women as prisoners and treated them as bondwomen. The Islamic injunction was thus only a retaliatory measure and served also the additional purpose of protecting the morals of captive women. Those conditions have ceased to exist now. There are no religious wars now and hence no prisoners of war to be treated as slaves and bondwomen. For a fuller note on slavery see 24 : 34.

9. "And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants,²⁵¹⁵

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ ﴿٩﴾

10. "And who are strict in the observance of their Prayers.²⁵¹⁶

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

^a70 : 33.

^b6 : 93; 70 : 35.

2515. Important Words :

راعون (watchful) is derived from رعى. They say رعى النجوم *i.e.* he watched the stars. رعى الامر means, he looked after the affair (Aqrah & Lane). See also 2 : 105.

Commentary :

This verse points to a yet higher stage in the spiritual development of man than the one described in v. 6 above. It means to say that the truly righteous men have full regard for the obligations they owe to God and man. They do not do good deeds cursorily or haphazardly but look to their minutest details with extreme caution and are careful not to overlook different aspects of their actions. They have a punctilious regard for the discharge of their responsibilities and duties. They do not relax in an endeavour to remain true to their trusts and are scrupulously true to the covenants and treaties they make with other people. This is what is signified by the word راعون. Compared to this stage of spiritual evolution the fourth stage at which a believer has complete control over his carnal passions is but a negative virtue. At that stage he only abstains from indulging in vice but in this, the fifth stage, he is always on the look-out to discover the most delicate facets of virtue and tries to act upon them. This is evidently a much higher stage than the one preceding it.

2516. Commentary :

This verse marks the last and the highest stage of spiritual development. Arriving at this stage the spiritual wayfarer almost becomes immune from the possibility of estrangement from his Creator. He basks, as it were, in the sun of God's love and his soul continues to derive sustenance from the fountain-head of His Grace and Mercy. He achieves his goal and all fear of faltering or falling disappears. At this stage the worship and remembrance of God becomes a second nature with him, a part and parcel of his being, the solace of his soul. He needs no reminding or exhortation on this account. He feels irresistibly attracted towards his Maker and Creator. At this stage the believer takes particular care about acts of collective worship which implies that national instinct becomes very strong in him and he tries to rouse and encourage in others also love for his community and country and subordinates individual interest to communal and national good. This is the significance of the words والذين هم على صلواتهم يحافظون. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, الصلاة *i.e.* Prayer constitutes the highest stage of the spiritual development of a believer (Ibn 'Asākir). In the fifth stage mentioned in v. 9 above the spiritual wayfarer was true to his trusts and responsibilities for virtue's sake. At this, the last stage of his spiritual development, he is true to them for love of God which is manifestly a higher stage. It is when a

11. These are the heirs,

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَرِثُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. ^aWho will inherit Paradise. They will abide therein.²⁵¹⁷

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Verily, ^bWe created man from an extract of clay ;²⁵¹⁸

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾

^a18 : 108; 70 : 36.

^b32 : 8-9.

believer attains to this stage that God descends upon his heart and he becomes at one with Him.

It is significant that the word صلوات (Prayers) has been used in the plural form. It shows that the believers not only are strict in the observance of Prayers themselves but urge their near and dear ones, their dependants and relatives also to be regardful of them. The word يحافظون signifies that they say their Prayers with all the rules and conditions attached to them, viz., (1) they say them regularly and at their appointed hours ; (2) they say them in congregation ; (3) they say them in a true spirit and with the utmost humility of the heart, not allowing wandering thoughts to spoil them and fully understanding the meanings of the words they utter and (4) they not only say their five daily Prayers but also supererogatory Prayers, particularly the Prayer in the latter part of the night (تهجد).

2517. Important Words :

فردوس may be said to have been derived from فردسه which means width ; amplitude. فردوس means, a garden ; or a garden comprising everything that is in the gardens ; an ample, beautiful garden ; a garden comprising grape-vines

and palm-trees ; a valley abounding in herbage like a garden, or a valley or valleys producing various sorts of plants or herbage ; الفردوس means, Paradise or a walled-garden or a garden of trees ; or it means, the highest stage of الجنة or its middle or highest part (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As believers mentioned in the foregoing verses combine in themselves all kinds of virtues, therefore, they will be made to reside in gardens which comprise everything that is found in any garden. As they brought death over their desires, so in return God will give them everlasting life and they will have everything they wish (50 : 36). This stage is the inevitable result of the strict spiritual discipline to which a believer subjects himself.

2518. Important Words :

سلالة (extract) is derived from سل (salla). They say سل الشيئى i.e. he drew out the thing or he drew it out from another thing gently. سلالة means, what is or becomes drawn forth from a thing. سلالة الشيئى means, an extract of a thing ; the clear or pure part or the choice, the best or most excellent part of a thing ; the *sperma genitalis* of a man ; the water that is drawn from the back ; progeny (Lane & Aqrab).

14. Then "We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository";²⁵¹⁹

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ١٤

15. Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a *shapeless* lump; then We fashioned bones out of this *shapeless* lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.²⁵²⁰

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظًا
فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ١٥

^aSee 22 : 6.

طين (clay) is derived from طان. They say طانه i.e. he plastered it with clay or mud. طانه الله means, God created him with a good natural disposition. طين means, clay, mud, earth, mould, soil (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

With this verse begins a description of the process of creation of the noblest handiwork of God—man, from the earliest stage when he lies dormant in the form of dust. The inorganic constituents of the earth through a subtle process of change become converted into the life-germ by way of food which a human being eats.

2519. Important Words :

قرار (a safe depository). قرار is inf. noun from قر. They say قر بالمكان i.e. he or it settled or established, was at rest or rested or resided, in the place. قرار means, a state of settledness, rest, permanence or continuance. It also means, a resting place or a place or time of rest, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 37 & 6 : 99.

مكن (safe or firmly fixed) is derived from مكن (makona). They say مكن عند الأمير i.e. he became of high position with the prince. مكنه من الشئ (makkana) means, he made him to have mastery

or authority and power over the thing. مكين means, possessed of power or authority and ascendancy, therefore well or firmly established in his place (Lane & Aqrab). See also 6 : 136

Commentary :

After having mentioned in the first ten verses of the *Sūra* the different stages of spiritual evolution of man the Qur'an proceeds to describe in this and the next few verses the different stages of his physical development and thus establishes a remarkable parallelism between his physical and spiritual birth and growth. Leaving out biological technicalities the *Sūra* gives the description in a clear and easily understandable language. Biology has not discovered anything which may be said to be opposed to the Quranic description. The present verse refers to the foetal stage. The sperm is deposited in the ovum and there it finds a safe repository and begins to grow.

2520. Important Words :

For "نطفه", "علقة" and "مضغه" see 22 : 6.

Commentary :

"نطفه" i.e. the impregnated ovum on its arrival in the cavity of the womb chooses by mutual

attraction a place for its abode in the inner wall of the womb, and there it becomes attached to it and does not flow out with discharges. After that it makes an erosion into this spot, and produces bleeding, thus making its way into the layers of the decidua. Then it becomes increasingly covered up with maternal blood, forming within the ovum a connection with it. At this stage it looks like a mass of congealed blood and therefore the Qur'ān calls it "علقه" which not only means congealed blood but also signifies an attachment or connection with something else. Thus a brief single word describes this stage of the ovum, i.e. its attractions, connections and the formation of the blood-vessels in it. In the next stage the ovum becomes a blastoderm, which is called "مضغه" in the Qur'ān. This blastoderm has three layers from which all the organs of the foetus are developed. The Qur'ān then describes the transformation of the layers of the blastoderm by the words, *Then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump*, which means that out of the "مضغه" (lump) God creates bones. After this God covers the bones with flesh and skin and other organs and then He perfects its creation internally. At this stage the body in the womb develops a soul from within itself. The Qur'ān has described this remarkable change in the words, *Then We developed it into another creation*. These words show that the soul is not imported into the human body from outside, but grows in the body as it develops in the womb. It is an essence which is distilled from the body in the course of a long process, as beer is distilled from barley. It has at first no separate existence from the body but the processes through which the body passes during its development in the womb distils from the body a delicate essence which is called the soul. As soon as the rela-

tionship between the soul and the body becomes completely adjusted, the heart begins to function. The soul then has a distinct existence of its own apart from the body which henceforth serves it as a shell.

As referred to above there exists a remarkable parallelism between the spiritual development of man as described in the first ten verses of the *Sūra* and the physical development of the embryo mentioned in this and the preceding verse.

The initial stage of spiritual advancement of man is described in the words, "who humble themselves in their Prayers" (v. 3 above), i.e. who assume an attitude of humility and submission while offering their Prayers and supplications to God. The stage of physical development corresponding to this initial stage of spiritual progress is the stage of "نطفه", or the impregnated ovum which is a seed that combines in itself, in a miniature form, all the different faculties, properties, external and internal organs, and all other features that become prominent in the later stages of physical development. The "نطفه" however, remains much more exposed to danger than the embryo in its later advanced stages. It is only like a seed which has just been cast into the ground and which has as yet formed no connection with its environments. The attraction of the womb has not yet given it a proper place of development. It is therefore liable to flow out and become destroyed in the passages of the organs of generation like a seed that falls on rocky ground.

What is true of "نطفه" which forms the first stage in the physical development of man is equally true of man in the first stage of his spiritual progress. This first stage is that condition of humility in which the believer prays to God. It is like a mere seed which is

cast in the soul of man, and comprises in an undeveloped form all the faculties and features which reveal themselves in a most attractive form in the last stages of his spiritual advancement. But just as the *نطفه* continues to remain in a precarious state until it forms a connection with the womb, similarly humility in Prayers is exposed to constant risk until man forms some spiritual connection with his Creator. Without this connection humility in Prayers is but a slippery stage where the spiritual wayfarer is at every step liable to fall.

The next stage in the physical development of man is that of *علقه* (a clot) when the sperm forms blood connection with the womb. It assumes the form of congealed blood and becomes safe from being destroyed.

Corresponding to this stage of *علقه* i.e. a clot, which is the second stage in the development of the foetus is that spiritual condition which has been described in the words, *who shun all that which is vain*. At this second stage the connection which man establishes with God is like the connection which the ovum establishes with the uterus on reaching the second stage. Just as it is not possible completely to get rid of vain desires and useless pursuits until one reaches the second stage of spiritual advancement,—mere humility and lowliness being liable to fail; similarly the ovum may come to nought before it becomes *علقه*.

But the connection which a person has formed with God in the second stage and which enables him to give up vain things and fruitless pursuits is at best a temporary and weak one, for his mind is not yet completely free from the love of material comforts and desires of the flesh. This stage is thus compared to *علقه* which is still tainted with the impurity of blood.

The third stage in the physical development of man is described in the words, *Then We fashioned the clot into a lump of flesh*. At this stage the physical frame of man is very much freed from the taint of impurity and becomes purer and firmer in substance. Similarly, in the third stage of his spiritual advancement which is referred to in the words, *And who are active in paying the Zakāt*, a true believer not only shuns vain things but in order to cleanse himself of the impurity of miserliness, spends a part of his property in the way of God. The stage of physical development that corresponds to this spiritual stage has been called *مضغه* (blastoderm) in the Qur'ān.

The *مضغه* stage, like its corresponding spiritual stage is superior to the earlier two stages of *نطفه* and *علقه* because it is more advanced and is more strongly attached to the uterus and is marked by greater density and solidity. The third spiritual stage described in v. 5 is marked by three characteristics which correspond to the three characteristics of the *مضغه* stage. At this stage, a believer voluntarily spends a portion of his property in the way of God and gives to others what he has earned with the sweat of his brow and thus spiritually he is more advanced than one who merely keeps aloof from fruitless pursuits. Moreover, his connection with God becomes more firm inasmuch as it involves a greater sacrifice to part with his hard earned money than merely to abandon vain things. Lastly, a greater sacrifice is followed by greater firmness and solidity in faith.

The words, *then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump*, refer to the fourth stage of embryonic development. At this stage there is greater solidity in the bones than in the *مضغه* which is like a lump of flesh. The bones also

become firmer and stronger. This fourth stage of physical growth of man corresponds to the fourth stage of spiritual advancement referred to in v. 6 above. Just as the bone is the hardest and most lasting part of the body, similarly the faith which gives a believer the power to hold his own against the violent storm of carnal passions must be exceptionally strong and enduring.

The words, *Then We clothed the bones with flesh*, refer to the fifth stage in the embryonic development which corresponds to the fifth stage of spiritual advancement referred to in v. 9. Just as righteousness adds to the spiritual beauty of a person, similarly the covering of the bones with flesh makes the skeleton of bones look beautiful. There is a peculiar resemblance between these two stages. God speaks of righteousness as لباس (garment). Similarly the expression used in describing the corresponding stage of embryonic development is كَسَوْنَا (We clothed). Thus the flesh which covers the bones is described as, and serves the purpose of, a garment just as righteousness or piety is like a garment adding to the spiritual beauty of a person. But even this fifth stage of physical development is far from perfect because the body has not yet been endowed with the soul and a soulless or lifeless body is but a useless thing. Similarly, in the fifth stage of spiritual advancement, though the spiritual way-farer has traversed a long distance towards his celestial goal he is yet far away from it. He tries faithfully to discharge his duties and obligations to God, yet he lacks something without which his spiritual development remains incomplete.

The sixth and last stage in the physical development of man in the womb is described in the words, *then We developed it into another creation*. At this stage the body is endowed with the soul. The words, "another creation" imply that this new creation is beyond human comprehension. Man has so far been quite at a loss to understand what soul is. According to the Qur'ān the body itself is the mother of the soul. As mentioned above the soul does not come from anywhere outside the body but is a light that lies hidden in the seed itself and grows with the growth of the body. This last stage of embryonic development corresponds to the sixth and highest stage of spiritual development referred to in v. 10 above. At this stage a heavenly light descends upon the heart of a believer and Divine love consumes his whole being, illuminating and animating it. At this stage prayer and remembrance of God becomes, as it were, part and parcel of his being without which he cannot live. He receives a new spiritual life and becomes wholly lost in God.

Such is the beautiful parallelism described by the Qur'ān which exists between the physical and spiritual development of man. When one comes to have a complete comprehension and realization of it he spontaneously exclaims, "Blessed be Allah, the Best of creators." Thus God created man and perfected him in six stages and six stages also has He ordained for his spiritual development. For a fuller and more exhaustive treatment of this subject see Brāhīn Aḥmadiyya vol. 5, by Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah, Holy Founder of the Aḥmadiyya-Movement.

16. Then after that "you surely must die."²⁵²¹

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَكَيْتُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. ^bThen on the Day of Resurrection will you be raised up.²⁵²²

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. "And We have created above you seven stages of heaven, and We are never neglectful of the creation."^{2522A}

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ ۖ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنْ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

^a39 : 31. ^b39 : 32. ^c78 : 13.

2521. Commentary :

After man has attained full development, there sets in a process of decay which ends in death. It is an immutable law of nature that all life must end in decay, dissolution and death. God alone is Ever-Living.

a stage of heaven; a web; or a tall palm-tree طرائق means, stages of heaven, so called because they lie one above another. طرائق الدهر means, the vicissitudes of times or fortune. According to Rāghib اطباق السماء (stages of heaven) are called طرائق (Lane & Aqrab). See also 20 : 64.

2522. Commentary :

After death man again will be restored to life in order that he might continue to make spiritual progress in the life to come. If there had been no life after death, man's creation would have been in vain, and all spiritual progress he might have made in this life would have been to no purpose. But man's life serves a grand and noble aim. He has not been created in vain (75 : 37-41). On the contrary he has been created for spiritual progress that knows no end. The progress he makes in the present life constitutes only a preparatory stage. Here he is like a child in the mother's womb. After death he is born into a new and fuller life which is the beginning of a never-ending progress.

Commentary :

The six stages of spiritual progress described in the first twelve verses of this *Sūra* become seven if "Paradise" (v. 12) be counted as the last stage of spiritual development when man attains the object of his creation. Similarly, if the preparatory stage previous to the formation of the sperm (referred to in v. 13) be added to the six stages of the embryonic development, this number also becomes seven. Thus the seven stages to which reference has been made in this verse correspond to the seven stages of the physical development of man mentioned in vv. 13-15. It is through these seven stages that man has to pass in order to achieve the highest point of spiritual development. These seven spiritual stages are as follows :

2522 A. Important Words :

طرائق (stages of heaven) is the plural of طريقه which means, a way, course, rule, mode or manner of acting or conduct; the way or course of an event; a line; streak or stripe in a thing;

1. The first stage may be called the stage of lack of spiritual perception or that of spiritual feelinglessness. At this stage, like inanimate things,

a person is completely devoid of all capacity to distinguish between right or wrong or good or evil. He is devoid of any high aims and his whole life seems to consist in providing for and meeting his physical needs. This stage of spiritual lifelessness is described by the Qur'ān in the words "Then your hearts became hardened after that till they were like stones or harder still" (2 : 75).

2. The second stage may be likened to vegetable life when, like vegetables, man comes to develop some capacity and power to grow and make spiritual progress, but spiritually he is yet too weak adequately to defend himself against the onslaughts of evil beings and spirits. This stage is described in the Quranic words:

"And if you invite them to guidance, they hear not. And thou seest them looking towards thee, but they see not" (7 : 199).

3. The third stage may be called the animal stage when spiritually a person is no better than animals, when on being called he hears the voice of the caller but does not understand the significance or meaning of the call. The Qur'ān beautifully describes the spiritual condition of such people in the words: "They have hearts but they comprehend not therewith, and they have eyes but they see not therewith, and they have ears but they hear not therewith. They are like cattle; nay, they are even more astray" (7 : 180).

4. The fourth stage is reached when the believer happens to develop greater love for God and greater righteousness and comes to realize the significance of his actions and to distinguish between good and evil. At this stage he acquires the power to resist satanic promptings in large measure but occasionally he falters and falls but

then speedily comes to his own. This stage is described in the Quranic words: "And those who are righteous, when a suggestion from Satan assails them, they remember God: and behold! they begin to see things rightly" (7 : 202).

5. The fifth is a still higher stage of spiritual progress when the God-fearing man attains such degree of Divine realization that submission to God's commandments and resignation to His decrees becomes, as it were, a part of his being and like angels he carries out fully and completely all Divine commandments. This stage is portrayed in the words: "And they do what they are commanded" (16 : 51).

6. The sixth stage is a much higher stage. At this stage the spiritual way-farer drinks so deep at the fountain of God's love that he entrusts all his affairs fully into God's safe keeping and becomes, as it were, a lifeless instrument in God's hands which He uses as He chooses, and all his actions and movements are in perfect unison with God's will. The Qur'ān gives a graphic description of the believers who have attained this high stage of spiritual progress in the words: "Nay, whoever submits himself completely to Allah, and he is the doer of good, shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve" (2 : 113).

7. The final and most developed stage of spiritual perfection is described in the Quranic words: "Then we perfect it into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of creators" (23 : 15). At this stage the God-intoxicated believer is a totally changed being, a quite new creation. In the sixth stage he had completely subordinated his will to the will of God so much so that God's will had become his will; at

19. "And We sent down water from the sky according to measure, and We caused it to stay in the earth—and surely, it is We Who determine its taking away."²⁵²³

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنْتَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَأَنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقِيدُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

“15 : 23.

this stage, however, his will becomes, as it were, the will of his Creator and Lord and he attains to such high degree of spiritual perfection that Divine attributes become increasingly reflected in the mirror of his heart and he becomes a manifestation of God's Beauty and Majesty. His hands and feet become, so to say, God's own hands and feet and he speaks with God's own tongue. "He does not speak out of his own desire. It is nothing but pure revelation that has been revealed by God," says the Qur'ān (53 : 4).

The words "We are not neglectful of the creation" signify that God has not neglected to make full provision for man's both physical and spiritual developments. From the next verse the *Sūra* proceeds to mention some of those things on which man's physical as well as his spiritual life depends.

2523. Commentary :

This verse gives the first illustration of how God supplies the physical and spiritual needs of man. All life, it says, depends on water which descends from heaven, in the form of rain, snow or hail. Similarly, spiritual water descends from heaven in the form of Divine revelation without which no spiritual life can exist. The verse purports to say that if men out of their perversity and ingratitude reject the Divine Message and the Heavenly Water which God has sent down, they will become

deprived of it. The parallelism in the physical and spiritual life of man with which this *Sūra* has opened, is further developed in the present and the next few verses.

The words, *And surely it is We Who determine its taking away*, refer to a well-known law of nature. The verse means to say that God sends down rain but rain-water does not stay in the earth permanently. It disappears by evaporation or flows into the sea through streams and rivers. The earth again becomes dry and then fresh rain is needed to make it fertile. The same is the case with Divine teaching. It powerfully influences the lives of men and brings about a great change in them for a certain period. Then it begins to be neglected, ignored and misinterpreted and so a fresh revelation is needed. This law of God came into operation with the life of man on this planet and it will remain in operation till the end of time.

The verse also embodies an implied reference to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet about his second advent in the person of the Promised Messiah and about the spread of irreligiousness and spiritual darkness in the centuries before the latter's advent, when there was to remain nothing of Islam but its name and nothing of the Qur'ān but its written words (*Mishkāṭ*, *kitāb al-'Ilm*) and belief would have gone up to the pleiades (*Bukhārī*, *kitāb al-Tafsīr*).

20. "And We produced for you thereby gardens of date-palms and vines ; for you therein are abundant fruits ; and of them you eat."²⁵²⁴

فَأَنشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُم فِيهَا
فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And a tree which springs forth from Mount Sinai ; it produces oil and a sauce for those who eat."²⁵²⁵

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ
وَصَنِيعٍ لِالَّذِينَ

^a16 : 12, 68 ; 36 : 35.

2524. Commentary :

In this verse God gives another illustration of the various boons and favours which He has bestowed on man. It also contains a subtle illusion to the fact that the garden of Islam will, for ever, remain full of fruit-bearing trees of various kinds which will yield fresh fruits in plenty in every season.

2525. Commentary :

The verse embodies yet another instance of God's bountiful provision for the physical needs of man. The words 'Mount Sinai', however, draw attention to the fact that if God has made provision for man's physical needs, He has not neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs and He has been doing so from time immemorial. The verse reminds us of the great prophecy of the Bible which is to the effect : "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them ; He shined forth from Mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints : from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. 33 : 2). The prophecy refers to the advent of Moses, the

appearance of Jesus from Seir and to the coming of the Holy Prophet of Islam with a fiery Law. The Holy Prophet actually had ten thousand Companions with him when he entered Mecca as a Conqueror. As to the identity of Paran see 2 : 130.

About the tree referred to in the verse which springs from Mount Sinai and produces oil the following extract may be read with interest :

The well lying to the east of the Church, and traditionally that from which Moses drew up for the daughters of Jethro, was sufficient to supply the domestic needs of the monks and their guests ; the water of the other, led by channels in the rock and carefully disposed pipes down through the sloping garden, made that a fertile and pleasant place, with grass and vegetable plots, rows of salad herbs, and the shade of many fruit trees—apple and pear, grape-vines, oranges, figs and almonds, as well as so great a number of olive trees that, together with those in a more distant garden, they produced enough oil for the culinary use of the monastery, and for the multitude of lamps which hung in their Church. ("Once To Sinai" by H. F. M. Prescott).

22. "And in the cattle *also* there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies and you have in them many benefits, and of them you *also* eat ;²⁵²⁶

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةٌ لِّتُؤْتُوا مِنِّي بَطُونًا
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. And ^hon them and on ships you are borne.²⁵²⁷

وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

^a 6 : 143 ; 16 : 6 ; 36 : 72-73 ; 40 : 80-81.

^b 16 : 8-9 ; 36 : 42-43 ; 43 : 13.

2526. Important Words :

"عبرة" (lesson) is derived from عبر and means, admonition or exhortation; or an admonition or exhortation by which one takes warning or example; a thing by which one is admonished; an indication or evidence whereby one passes from ignorance to knowledge of what is not seen from the knowledge of what is seen (Lane & Arab). See also 4 : 44.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that man derives great benefits from the cattle. They are living machines which produce for him such a wholesome and nutritious food as milk, from fodder, grain herbage and leaves of trees, etc., which they eat. Man has so far failed to devise a machine which like these Divinely devised machines could produce milk from these things. The word "عبرة" which as given under "Important Words" above, means an 'indication or evidence whereby one passes from ignorance to knowledge seems to allude to the subtle process which takes place in the bellies of some of the animals and which turns grass or herbage eaten by them into pure and wholesome milk and by pondering over which one is led

to acquire an insight into God's great power and into the subtle ways through which Divine laws work. By this simile of grass and milk we are led to think that just as fodder, grain and grass, without passing through the wonderful machine created by God in the bellies of animals, cannot produce milk, similarly human reason which is like grass and grain, cannot produce, without the aid and assistance of Divine revelation, a teaching which like milk is very useful for man's moral and spiritual development.

2527. Commentary :

The cattle are very useful animals. We eat their flesh, drink their milk and use them also as mounts and as beasts of burden, etc. Similarly, ships are extremely useful things. Reference has been made in this and the preceding few verses to several of the things which are highly beneficial to man for his material needs and upon which to a very large extent his very existence depends. It is quite obvious that God Who has made such vast provision for the physical needs of man could not have failed to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. This is the meaning and purport of this verse.

R. 2 24. ^aAnd We did send Noah to his people, and he said, 'O my people, serve Allah. You have no God other than Him. Will you not then be righteous ?'²⁵²⁸

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. ^bAnd the chiefs of his people, who disbelieved, said, 'He is only a man like yourselves ; he seeks to make himself superior to you. And if Allah had so willed, ^cHe could have surely sent down angels *with him*. We have never heard of such a thing among our forefathers.'²⁵²⁹

نَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ
مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ
مَلَائِكَةً ۖ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

^a7 : 60 ; 11 : 26 ; 71 : 2.

^b7 : 61 ; 11 : 28 ; 17 : 95 ; 34 : 44. ^c17 : 96.

2528. Commentary :

In the preceding few verses a brief account was given as to how God has provided for the physical needs of man. From this verse begins an account of the means which God has provided for the satisfaction of his spiritual needs. The coming of Divine Messengers is the first and foremost means provided for this purpose. The present and the next few verses refer to Noah, the first great Prophet who came with a Divine revealed Law. He called his people to God, to the path of success and salvation and like other Prophets emphasized the Unity of God which was the pivot round which all the religious beliefs and teachings revolved, and which formed the corner stone of the edifice of all religions.

It may be said in passing that humanity had to pass through four cycles to reach its perfect moral and spiritual development: (1) In the cycle

of Adam the foundations were laid of human civilization. (2) Noah was the founder of the cycle of the *Sharī'at*. (3) In the cycle of Moses the details of the *Sharī'at* were revealed and (4) with the Holy Prophet was completed the fourth and last cycle when the *Sharī'at* became complete and perfect and man attained the highest peak of social, moral and spiritual development.

2529. Commentary :

The disbelievers have always suffered from a superiority complex and therefore have always rejected Divine Messengers on the plea that they cannot accept the lead of one who is "only a man like ourselves."

The verse incidentally implies that belief in the existence of angels was entertained from time immemorial. As far back as Noah's time his opponents wanted to see angels descending on them. See also 11 : 28.

26. "He is only a man *stricken* with madness ; wait, therefore, concerning him for a while."²⁵³⁰

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فُتِّرَبَّوْا بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. ^bHe said, 'O my Lord, help me, for they have treated me as a liar.'

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. So We sent revelation to him, *saying*, "Make the Ark under Our eyes and *according to* Our revelation. ^aAnd when Our command comes, and the fountains *of the earth* gush forth, take thou into it two of every kind, male and female, and thy family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth. And address Me not concerning those who have done wrong ; they shall be drowned."²⁵³¹

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلَكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيُنَا
فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ
الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ
مُغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

^a54 : 10.

^b26 : 118-119 ; 54 : 11.

^c11 : 38.

^d11 : 41 ; 54 : 13-14.

2530. Commentary :

In this and the preceding verse Noah's opponents are represented as having brought forward six objections to reject his Message : First, that he was only a man like themselves. Secondly, that he sought to impose his leadership on them. Thirdly, that no angel had descended from heaven to testify to his truth. Fourthly, that his teaching was opposed to the time-honoured beliefs of their forebears. Fifthly, that he was stricken with madness, and sixthly, that sooner or later he was sure to come to grief. These objections have always been raised against every Prophet and Divine Reformer in every age.

2531. Important Words :

أَعْيُن is the plural of عَيْن which means, (1) the eye; (2) look or view; (3) the people or inmates of a house; (4) brothers from the same father

and mother and (5) one's protection and honour (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11 : 38.

زوج means, two persons of the same species, *i.e.* a male and a female. See also 2 : 26 & 6 : 144.

For فار and تنور see 11 : 41.

Commentary :

The expression, *against whom the word has already gone forth*, refers to those rejectors of truth whose destruction had already been decreed; and the words, *address Me not*, mean "do not intercede with Me." In spite of this "clear Divine commandment Noah did pray to God to save his son. This shows that he did not regard the Divine commandment contained in the words "against whom the word has already gone forth" as applicable to his son. This was an error of judgment on Noah's part and all Prophets are liable to make such errors. See also 11 : 38-48.

29. “And when thou hast settled on the Ark—thou and those that are with thee—say, ‘All praise belongs to Allah Who has saved us from the unjust people !’

فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلِكِ فَقُلِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّيْنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝٢٩

30. “And when thou dost disembark from the Ark say, ^b‘My Lord, cause me to land a blessed landing, for Thou art the Best of those who bring people to land.’”²⁵³²

وَقُلْ رَبِّ انْزِلْنِي مُنزَلًا مُبَارَكًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ
الْمُنْزِلِينَ ۝٣٠

31. “Verily, in this there are Signs. Surely, We did try the people of Noah.”²⁵³³

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَبَاطِلِينَ ۝٣١

32. “Then We raised after them another generation.”^{2533A}

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ۝٣٢

^a11 : 42 ; 43 : 14.

^b11 : 49.

^c29 : 16.

^d23 : 43 ; 25 : 39.

2532. Commentary :

For a detailed account of Noah and the Ark and the place where it came to rest, see 11 : 38-45. Briefly it may be stated here that according to the Bible Noah's Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 8 : 4) and according to the Qur'ān it rested upon Al-Jūdī. It is of interest to note that ارا راط being a combination of ارا which means, “I saw” and راط which means, “he sought refuge in the mountains,” signifies a place of safety in the mountains and the word جودى means, “my beneficence, my grace, my mercy.” Thus whereas according to the Bible the Ark rested in a place of safety, according to the Qur'ān it rested in a place where God's mercy, grace or beneficence were manifested.

2533. Commentary :

God tried the people of Noah first by

bestowing favours upon them and then by visiting them with punishment when they showed their ingratitude by rejecting His Messenger.

The words ^اا راط may be of general application meaning that it is an invariable practice of God that He tries men sometimes by bestowing favours upon them and sometimes by visiting them with punishment for their misdeeds.

2533A. Commentary :

The reference in the words “another generation” is to 'Ād, the people of the Prophet Hūd. The following several verses, if compared to vv. 7 : 66-70, make this inference irresistible, because the conditions and circumstances of “another generation” mentioned in the verse under comment and the following few verses closely resemble those of 'Ād mentioned in 7 : 66-70.

33. And We sent among them a Messenger from among themselves *with the message*, 'Serve Allah, you have no God other than Him. Will you not then fear God?'²⁵³⁴

فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمُ
مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ٢٥٣٤

3. 34. And the chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter and "whom We had afforded ease and comfort in this life, said, 'This is but a man like yourselves. ^bHe eats of that of which you eat, and drinks of that of which you drink;²⁵³⁵

وَقَالَ السَّلَافُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِإِيقَاءِ
الْآخِرَةِ وَاتَّرفَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ
مِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا
تَشْرَبُونَ ٢٥٣٥

a17 : 17. b21 : 9 ; 25 : 8.

2534. Commentary :

The human caravan wended its way till when men totally consigned God to oblivion and strayed away from the path to which the Messengers of God after Noah had led them, a Prophet was again raised among them and he also like his predecessors emphasized the basic principle of all religions—the Unity of God. "Worship Allah," has always been the clarion call of all Divine Messengers, if only mankind should realize the real significance and import of Divine worship.

2535. Commentary :

It is indeed very strange that the one fact which really goes in favour of Divine Messengers has been advanced by disbelievers throughout the ages as an argument against them, viz.,

that they were mortals like themselves who ate and drank and were subject to all the demands of nature. All the Messengers were rejected on the basis of this foolish plea. The rejectors never paused to ponder over this simple fact that the object of the raising up of Messengers was that they should have served as a model for men, and how could one who was not human and therefore immune from human weaknesses and frailties, could be a model for human beings? Only a man could be a model for men.

The second reason that has always led disbelievers to reject Divine Messengers is that they (the disbelievers) "have been afforded ease and comfort in this life." Instead of being grateful to God for His manifold favours upon them those very Divine blessings make disbelievers so arrogant and defiant that they reject God's Messengers.

35. "And if you obey a man like yourselves, you will then be surely losers;

وَلَيْنَ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا الْخِصْرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. "Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will be brought forth again ?

أَيَعِدُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَنْتُمْ مُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. "Far, very far from truth, is that which you are promised;²⁵³⁶

هِيَ هَاتِ هِيَ هَاتِ لِمَا تُوْعَدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. "There is no life other than our present life ; we were lifeless and now we live, but we shall not be raised up again;^{2536A}

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِبَعْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. 'He is only a man who has forged a lie against Allah ; and we are not going to believe him.'²⁵³⁷

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

23 : 48 17 : 50 ; 36 : 79 ; 50 : 4. 50 : 4. 6 : 30 ; 19 : 67 ; 36 : 79 ; 44 : 36 ; 45 : 25.

2536. Important Words :

هِيَ هَاتِ denotes one's deeming a thing remote or improbable and despairing of it, and means, بعد جدا (he or it was or became very far off) or ما أبعد (how far it is), signifying the intensification of the sense of بعد (to be far) though it also means بعد. The word هِيَ هَاتِ followed by ل means, بعد (he or it was or became far off) or بعد التصديق (it was far from being believed or from truth or simply البعد (remoteness). Without ل after it, it denotes pronouncing a thing to be remote. هِيَ هَاتِ كَذَا means, far or far from being believed or from truth is such a thing, or هِيَ هَاتِ لَكَذَا means, remoteness or remoteness from being believed or from the truth. is to be attributed to such a thing (Lane).

2536A. Commentary :

Denial of the life after death is the second root cause of rejection by disbelievers of Divine Messengers.

2537. Commentary :

The present and the preceding five verses contain the objections which disbelievers have always raised against God's Messengers and these exactly were the objections which Noah's opponents had raised against him, and which, in fact, were raised against every Prophet, viz., "There is no life after death ; men live and die and are followed by others; this is how the world has gone on and how life will continue; it is foolish to give up the time-honoured

40. He said, 'My Lord, help me, for they have treated me as a liar'.²⁵³⁸

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٥٣٨﴾

41. God said, 'In a little while they will surely become repentant.'²⁵³⁹

قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٣٩﴾

42. "Then punishment overtook them rightfully, and We made them as rubbish. Cursed, then, be the people who do wrong!"²⁵⁴⁰

فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُرَابًا
فَبَعَدَ لِلْقَوْمِ الظُّلُمَاتِ ﴿٢٥٤٠﴾

47 : 92 ; 11 : 68.

beliefs of our forefathers and accept the leadership of a man who is in no way superior to us and is subject to all the weaknesses and frailties to which human flesh is heir and who has invented some stories, seeking in this way to impose his leadership upon us."

2538. Commentary :

Prayer is the chief weapon which God's Prophets employ against the forces of evil and it is with the help of this weapon that they succeed. This is a fact to which the history of all religions bears an eloquent testimony.

2539. Commentary :

The wages of sin is death. The leaders of disbelief always come to grief. They also repent of their misdeeds but often too late. This is another lesson which the history of religion teaches but which disbelievers never take to heart.

2540. Important Words :

الصَّيْحَةُ (punishment) means, a loud cry ; punishment, castigation, chastisement ; a hostile

or predatory incursion by which a tribe is surprised (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11 : 68.

غُرَابًا (rubbish) is derived from غَثَا (ghatha). They say غَثَا الْوَادِي *i.e.* the valley has in it abundance of rubbish. غَثَتِ النَفْسُ *i.e.* the stomach heaved, or became agitated with a tendency to vomit. غَثَاءُ means, the rubbish or particles of things or refuse and scum and rotten leaves with the scum borne upon the surface of a torrent. The Arabs say مَالُهُ غَثَاءٌ وَ عَمَلُهُ *i.e.* his property is as rubbish borne by a torrent and his work is as motes that are seen in the rays of the sun and his labour is a thing that is unapparent. غَثَاءُ النَّاسِ means, the low and the vile and the refuse of mankind (Lane & Aqrab).

بَعَدَ means, perdition or death; curse or malediction etc. The expression بَعَدَا لَهُ means, may he be cursed or may God alienate him from good (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11 : 45.

Commentary :

The verse points to a lesson to which history of religion generally and the Qur'ān particularly draws attention, *viz.*, that the opponents of

43. "Then We raised after them other generations.

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

44. ^bNo people can go ahead of their appointed time, nor can they remain behind it.²⁵⁴¹

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. Then We sent Our Messengers one after another. "Every time there came to a people their Messenger, they treated him as a liar. So We made them follow one another *to destruction* and We made them mere tales. Cursed, then, be the people who believe not.²⁵⁴²

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرًا كُلَّمَا جَاءَ أُمَّةً رَسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَاتَّبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبُعْدًا لِقَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

^aSee 23 : 32.

^b15 : 6.

^c2 : 88 ; 36 : 31.

God's Prophets always meet with failure and destruction and believers whom they regard as the scum and dregs of humanity succeed in their mission and ultimately become the teachers and leaders of nations.

ruption. وتره of the nose means the partition between the two nostrils. جاؤوا تترى means, they came following one another; one after another. ثم أرسلنا رسلنا تترى means, then We sent Our Messengers one after another; or interruptedly; at intervals or making a long time to intervene between every two (Lane & Aqrab).

2541. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that no people can thwart their decreed destiny. Rejection of Divine Prophets never goes unpunished but it is for God to determine the form and the time of the punishment to be meted out to disbelievers.

Commentary :

This verse like several others shows that after a Divine Law has been revealed God continues to raise other Messengers to support, explain and establish it. After the Law of Moses was revealed God sent other Messengers who followed the Mosaic Law and exhorted the Israelites to follow it.

2542. Important Words :

تترًا (one after another) is derived from وتر. They say وتره i.e. he made it (a number) sole; or one and no more; he made it to be odd number. وتر الخير means, he made the tidings to follow one part after another or to follow with a small space between every two portions thereof. تواتر means, it was consecutive, or was so with intervals or was so with inter-

It appears from the Bible that there had always lived among the Israelites a number of Prophets and Reformers who explained the Torah to the Israelites. Jesus was the last of these Prophets. He himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.

46. Then ^aWe sent Moses and his brother Aaron, with Our Signs and a clear authority,

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَآخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا
وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. To Pharaoh and his chiefs ; but they behaved arrogantly and they were a haughty people.

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا
عَالِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. And they said, 'Shall we believe in two men like ourselves while their people are our servants?'²⁵⁴³

فَقَالُوا أَنْتُمِنْ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا
عِبْدُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

49. So they called them liars, and they were of those who were destroyed.

فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

50. ^bAnd We gave Moses the Book, that they might be guided.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

51. And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and gave them refuge on an elevated land having meadows and springs of running water.²⁵⁴⁴

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ آيَةً وَآوَيْنَاهُمَا إِلَىٰ
رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ ﴿٤١﴾

^a20 : 43-44. ^b2 : 88 ; 17 : 3 ; 32 : 24 ; 40 : 54.

For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5 : 17, 18).

The words, "We made them mere tales," signify that when the opponents of the Prophets are destroyed their destruction is so complete that generations coming after them talk of them as people who once lived on this earth, because no trace of their existence or work remains behind.

2543. Commentary :

As mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān it is pride and conceit that have proved the undoing of many a people to whom a Divine Messenger was sent. A sense of false superiority stood in their way. In this and the preceding two verses the same story is told. Pharaoh and his chiefs said in false pride and arrogance how they could believe in persons whose people had served them as slaves.

2544. Important Words :

آوَيْنَاهُمَا (We gave them refuge) is derived from

أوى. They say أوى البيت أو الى البيت *i.e.* he lodged in the house and found rest and satisfaction therein. آواه البيت أو الى البيت (*āwā*) means, he lodged him in the house, he gave him shelter, refuge or asylum in the house. أوى is used when a person finds protection, asylum, satisfaction and comfort in a place after he has been through hardships and privations (Lane & Arqab). See also 8 : 73 ; 11 : 44; 12 : 70 & 93 : 7.

ربة (elevated land) is derived from ربه which means, it increased; it became high; he grew up. ربة means, a hill or elevated ground or an elevated place (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 266; 22:6.

قرار (meadows) is inf. noun from قر. They say قر بالمكان *i.e.*, he settled or became established; rested; resided in the place. قرار means, a state or place or time of rest, permanence or continuance; a secure dwelling; a place where water rests in a meadow. It is also a plural (or rather a coll. gen. n.) of which the singular is قرارة. The word is also applied to low and fertile grounds (Lane & Aqrab).

معين (springs of running water) may be taken as derived from معن or عان. They say, معن الماء *i.e.* the water flowed. معن المطر الارض means, the rain constantly fell upon the ground and its thirst was satisfied. معن النبات means, the plant had plentiful irrigation. عان الماء أو الدمع means, the water or the tear flowed. عانت البئر means, the water of the well became plentiful. معين means, flowing water, a spring. ماء معين means, flowing water or the water which the eye sees flowing upon the surface of the earth (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse constitutes a befitting sequel to the subject dealt with in the few preceding verses,

viz., that it is an invariable Divine law that God's Messengers are at first rejected and persecuted but eventually they succeed and their rejectors come to grief and that in consonance with this Divine law, Jesus, the last Israelite Prophet also met with severe persecution at the hands of his opponents. They got him hung on the Cross. But true to His law and promise God delivered him from the accursed death by crucifixion, and to off-set his seeming failure in the early stages of his mission gave him shelter along with his mother in a land full of green meadows and running springs, where his mission prospered and where he lived to a ripe old age. As Jesus's death, like his birth, has become a subject of great controversy, and some confusion and doubt still persist as to how and where he passed the last days of his crowded life, and as the question of the manner of his death forms a vital question with the Christian Faith, a somewhat exhaustive note on this very important, albeit baffling religious question is called for.

The Qur'ān and the Bible, reinforced by authenticated facts of history, lend powerful support to our view that Jesus did not die on the Cross. The following arguments substantiate and support this contention:-

1. Jesus could not have died on the Cross because he was a Divine Prophet and a righteous servant of God and according to the Bible "he that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21 : 23).

2. On the night before Jesus was nailed to the Cross he had prayed to God in great agony to "take away this cup (of death on the Cross)

from me" (Mark 14 : 36 ; Matt. 26 :29 ; Luke, 22 : 42); and his prayer was heard (Heb. 5 : 7).

3. Jesus had predicted that like Jonah who had gone into the belly of the whale alive and had come out of it alive (Matt. 12:40) he would remain in an excavated sepulchre for three days and would come out of it alive.

4. He had also foretold that after having delivered his Message to the Israelites in Palestine he would go to seek out the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and would bring them back into the Master's fold (John 10 : 16). Even Jews themselves in Jesus's time believed that the Lost Tribes of Israel had become dispersed in different lands (John 7:34,35).

5. Jesus had remained hung on the Cross only for about three hours (John 9:14) while persons of normal constitutions, had remained on the Cross for as many as three to six days and then died from exhaustion, hunger and exposure

6. Immediately after he had been taken down from the Cross Jesus's side was pierced and blood and water flowed out of it which was a certain sign of life (John 19 : 34).

7. The Jews themselves were not sure of Jesus's death because they had asked Pilate to have a guard posted at his sepulchre "lest his disciples come by night and steal him away and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead' (Matt. 27 : 64).

8. There is not to be found in all the Gospels a single recorded statement of an eye-witness to the effect that Jesus had died on the Cross or that he was dead when he was taken down from the Cross or when he was placed in the tomb. The Jews had their own doubts and none of the disciples was present at the scene

of crucifixion, all having fled when Jesus was taken to Calvary.

The fact of the case seems to be that, presumably due to the dream of his wife "to have nothing to do with that just man," Pilate had believed Jesus to be innocent and had therefore conspired with Joseph of Arimaethia, a respectable member of the Essene Order to which Jesus himself belonged before he was commissioned as a Prophet, to save his life. The trial of Jesus took place on Friday, Pilate having purposely prolonged it knowing that the next day being the Sabbath Day the condemned persons would not be left on the Cross after sunset.

When at last he found himself compelled to condemn Jesus, Pilate gave his judgment only three hours before sunset, thus making himself sure that no person of normal health could die in such a short time by remaining on the Cross. He took additional care to see that Jesus was given wine or vinegar mingled with myrrh to render him less sensitive to pain. When after three hours' suspension Jesus was taken down from the Cross in an unconscious state (probably under the influence of vinegar which was administered to him) Pilate readily granted Joseph of Arimaethia's request and handed over Jesus's body to him. Unlike those of the two malefactors who were hung along with him, his bones were not broken and Joseph had him placed in a spacious room hewn in the side of a rock. There was no medical autopsy, no stethoscopic test, no inquest with the aid of the evidence of those who were last with him ("Mystical life of Jesus" by H. Spencer Lewis).

9. "The Crucifixion by an Eye-Witness," a book which was at first published in 1873 in U.S.A. and which is an English translation of an

ancient Latin copy of a letter written seven years after the Crucifixion by an Essene Brother in Jerusalem to a member of this Brotherhood in Alexandria lends further support to the view of Jesus having been taken down from the Cross alive. The book narrates in detail all the events leading to the Crucifixion, the scenes at the Calvary and also the incidents that took place afterwards.

10. An ointment, the famous Marham-i-Īsā, the ointment of Jesus) was prepared and applied to Jesus's wounds and he was tended and looked after by Joseph of Arimaethia and Nicodemus, a very learned and highly respected member of the Essene Brotherhood.

11. After the wounds of Jesus had been sufficiently healed he left the tomb in which he was placed and met some of his disciples who "were horrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit." He assured them that he was no spirit but a man of flesh and bones and had his food with them and walked the whole distance from Jerusalem to Galilee on foot (Luke 24 : 37-43).

All these authentic facts of history show that Jesus did not die on the Cross. The story of his death on the Cross and his having risen from the dead after three days and having bodily gone to heaven may deceive a gullible people holding fantastic beliefs, it cannot satisfy any reasonable person (Enc. Brit. article on "Ascension").

The fact having been established that Jesus survived Crucifixion, the question still remains, if Jesus did not die on the Cross and there being no trace of his tomb in Palestine, the scene of his early missionary activities, where did he go and live and die after the great event?

It is now a known fact established by reliable historical data that after the event of Crucifixion, Jesus, finding life unsafe in Palestine, forsook that country for ever and went to seek the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and to preach his Message to them. For this purpose he took a long and arduous journey to the East, where those Ten Tribes had lived after their great Dispersion by the Assyrians and Babylonians, first to Assyria, Mesopotamia and Media and then to further East—Afghanistan, Kashmir and India. While yet in Palestine, Jesus had given sufficient indications, though in parables and proverbs, as was his wont, that in some future time he would have to leave Palestine for another country (John 8 : 21 ; 10 : 16 ; 13 : 33).

After Crucifixion Jesus felt that he was a hunted man and that if he remained in his native place he would be arrested again and probably killed. He, therefore, went into hiding. The news having reached him of the cruel persecution of his disciples he was sorely distressed, and in extreme agony of spirit exclaimed; "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8 : 20). He decided to leave Palestine for all time. From Jerusalem he went to Nazareth and from Nazareth to Damascus where he stayed for some time at a place which is known to this day as Maqām-i-Īsā. Finding himself insecure even in Damascus he left for Nişibīn (Raudat al-Şafa and Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh). He did not feel safe even at Nişibīn (Ṭabarī) and left for far-off Kashmir. Finding it unsafe to travel under his real name he henceforward, travelled under the assumed name of Yūz Āsaf (Yūz in Hebrew being the same as Yasū' and Āsaf meaning the gatherer). Henceforward Jesus becomes Yūz Āsaf and is known by this name till his death. On his way from Nişibīn to Kashmir

he passed through Iran and Afghanistan. At last he reached his destination.

The last vestiges of doubt as to Jesus's travel to Afghanistan and Kashmir are dispelled by that very useful book "The Unknown Life of Jesus" written by Nicholas Notovitch, a Russian traveller, who visited the Far East in about 1877. He calls Kashmir "the valley of eternal bliss" which may be regarded as an apt rendering in English of the Quranic words ذات قرارومعین. In this book Notovitch tells us that Jesus came to India, while he was only 14 years of age, lived there for some time, learnt the use of herbs, medicine and mathematics and studied also the Hindu religion and held religious discussions with the Brahmans who ultimately became his enemies. The fact having come to his knowledge that the Brahmans were seeking to kill him, he left India for Nepal and then went to Kashmir and Afghanistan and stopping on the way in Persia he went back to Judea. Sir Francis Younghusband, who was at the time when Nicholas Notovitch visited Kashmir, British resident at the court of the Maharaja of Kashmir, met him near the Zojila Pass.

Recent research about Jesus's travels in the East lends powerful support to Notovitch's book. The following quotations are very significant :

In Srinagar we first encountered the curious legend about Christ's visit to the place. Afterwards we saw how widely spread in India, in Laddakh and in Central Asia, was the legend of the visit of Christ to those parts ("Heart of Asia," by Professor Nicholas Roerich). All over Central Asia, in Kashmir and Laddakh and Tibet and even further north, there still exists a strong belief that Jesus or Issa travelled about there ("Glimpses of World History," by Jawahar Lal Nehru).

One day Raja Shalewahin went to a country in the Himalayas. There he saw

a Raja of Sakas (foreigners) at Wein, who was fair of colour and wore white clothes. The Raja asked him who he was. He replied that he was *Yusashaphat* (Yūz Āsaf) and was born of a woman (according to another report, "born of a virgin").....The Raja asked him about his religion. He replied, 'it is love, truth and purity of heart and on account of this I am called '*Isā Masīh.*' (Sutta. *Bhavishya Maha Purana*, P. 282, translated by Dr. Shiv Nath Shastri and quoted by Robert Graves and Joshua Podro in "Jesus in Rome").

Finding it impossible to deny the fact of Jesus's having been taken down alive from the Cross and of his journey to the East, some scholars have taken refuge behind some obscure passages in Notovitch's book to claim that Jesus came to East *before* and not *after* he was commissioned as a Divine Prophet. But this inference appears manifestly to be ill-founded. A mere boy of 13 or 14 years of age as Jesus is stated to have been when he came to India, he could not have conceived of undertaking so long and arduous a journey to a far-off land, and thus of exposing himself to mortal danger on the way. After all what attraction or motives Jesus had, at such an early age, in coming over to India and studying the Hindu religion and in having discussion with the Brahmans so as to make them his enemies, as we are told in Notovitch's book. And if at all he came to India, what interest the people of India and Kashmir had in keeping a record of the activities, doings and wanderings of a boy of 13 or 14. It is only God's great Prophets who in the discharge of their Divine mission regard no sacrifice too great to suffer. It is, therefore, *after* Jesus had been entrusted with his Divine mission and had been rejected by the Jews in Palestine, that he forsook that country to seek, in fulfilment of the old Biblical prophecies, the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and undertook the long and dangerous journey to

India and Kashmir. It is after he had come to Afghanistan and Kashmir and had preached his Message to the Israelites living there and after hundreds of thousands of people had accepted him and he had lived an eventful life to the very ripe age of 120 (Kanz al-'Ummāl, vol. 6) that records came to be kept of his doings. Early Christian writers and dignitaries of the Church were forced to admit that Jesus had lived up to old age and died full of years. In his "An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament" (p.610) the famous Biblical scholar, Dr. James Moffatt writes: "Irenaeus quotes from the presbyters who are claimed to have been in touch with the apostle John, . . . that Jesus died when he was in his *aetas Senior*, i.e. over forty or fifty." . . . "According to tales current in the days of Papias the Lord lived to a great age...*aetas Senior* [Early History of the Christian Church by Monsignor Louis Duchesne, vol. I, p. 105].... "In the later he also includes the fact that Jesus must have passed through and been subjected to all the conditions of a complete human life from birth to old age and death" (History of Dogma by Dr. Adolf Harnack, vol. 11, pp. 277-278).

It is also in keeping with the time-honoured practice of God's Messengers that they have to do Hijrat *after* and not *before* they are entrusted with a Divine mission and Jesus too was true to this prophetic tradition. Other facts of unimpeachable historical evidence, to which we will presently refer, also prove and establish this event of outstanding historical importance. Jesus came to Afghanistan and Kashmir because "other sheep which are not of this fold" (John 10 : 16) lived there. His mission could not have become complete unless he should have brought those sheep into the Master's fold.

Here are some of the arguments to show that the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel lived in Afghanistan and Kashmir, after the Israelites were dispersed by the Assyrians and Babylonian kings:

After the death of Solomon and in the reign of his cruel and worthless son whom the Qur'ān calls "the worm of the earth" (34 : 15) a revolt headed by Jeroboam split the Jews into two perpetually hostile camps. The major section, the Ten Tribes assumed the name of Israel and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin came to be known as Judah. At the invitation of the King of Judah, the Assyrians, under Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser and Sargon invaded Samaria, the capital of the Ten Tribes, destroyed it and carried the Ten Tribes as captives to Assyria, Mesopotamia and Media. Later on the Assyrian Kingdom was destroyed by the combined armies of Babylonia and Media. When Zedekiah, the King of Judah, revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, the latter, laid siege to Jerusalem, completely destroyed the Temple and carried almost all the inhabitants into captivity. The Ten Tribes were for ever lost to the Palestinian Jewry because when the Assyrians and the Babylonians extended their territories to the East, they carried their captives, the Ten Tribes of Israel, to Iraq and Persia for the purpose of colonization and later when the Persians under Darius and Cyrus extended their territories still further East, to Afghanistan and India, these Jewish tribes migrated with them to these countries and thus they became settled in the East—in Afghanistan and Kashmir and even in Samarkand and Bukhara, and were for ever lost to western Jewry.

Thus as a result of their conquest first by the Assyrians and the Babylonians and then by the

Persians the Jews became dispersed to Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir and even to Khurasan, Samarkand and Bokhara. The Kashmiris and Afghans of today are the descendants of those 'Lost Tribes of Israel.' This fact is quite evident from the traditions, history and written records of these two peoples. The names of their towns and tribes, their physical features, their customs, habits, mode and manner of living, their dress, etc., all point in the same direction. Their ancient monuments and old inscriptions also support this view.

The fact that there are many places, persons and tribes in Afghanistan and particularly in Kashmir which are named after Israelite names, and that the customs, habits, manners, mode of life, form of dress of the Kashmiris, and their physical features resemble those of the Jews, coupled with the fact that their folklore is full of Jewish stories and that their language possesses hundreds of words which in pronunciation and meaning are identical with Hebrew words and that the name Kashmir is in reality Kashir meaning "like Syria" (or it seems to have been named after Kash or Cush, a grandson of Noah), impart a certainty to the view that the Afghans and Kashmiris are largely the descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel which is incapable of being assailed.

When it is established that Jesus did not die on the Cross and that after having recovered from his wounds and being afraid of his life he left Jerusalem for the East, and when it is also established that the Afghans and the Kashmiris are descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and that in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Prophets of yore, Jesus had to search for these tribes to reclaim them, there remains no manner

of doubt about the fact that he did come to Afghanistan and Kashmir. But the greatest and best proof of his having come to Kashmir and of having lived and died there is the presence of his tomb in Khanyar street, Srinagar, Kashmir. There is a tomb in this street which is called Rauzabal and is variously known as the tomb of Yūz Āsaf, of Nabī Ṣāhib, of Shāhzāda Nabī and even of 'Īsā Ṣāhib. According to well-established historical accounts this Yūz Āsaf came to Kashmir more than 1900 years ago and preached in parables and used many of the same parables as Jesus did. In certain books of history he is described as a Nabī (Prophet). Moreover, Yūz Āsaf is a Biblical name meaning "Yasū", the gatherer," which is one of the descriptive names of Jesus as his mission was to gather the lost tribes of Israel into the Master's fold as he himself says : "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10 : 16).

The following historical quotations shed some light on this subject:

The tomb next to that of Sayyid Naṣīr al-Dīn is generally known as that of a Prophet who was sent to the inhabitants of Kashmir, and the place is known as the shrine of a Prophet. He was a Prince who came to Kashmir from a foreign land. He was perfect in piety, righteousness and devotion; he was made a Prophet by God and was engaged in preaching to the Kashmiris. His name was Yūz Āsaf and he was a descendant of Moses (Tarīkh Ā'zamī pp. 82-85).....Yūz Āsaf wandered about in several lands till he reached a country called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide and lived and stayed there till death overtook him (Ikmal al-Din...pp. 358—359).

4. 52. O ye Messengers, "eat of the things that are pure, and do good works. Verily, I am well aware of what you do."²⁵⁴⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا
إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ۝٥٢

a 7 : 33.

Kashmir legend, I have been told, contains reference to a Prophet who lived here and taught as Jesus did by parables little stories that are repeated in Kashmir to the present day' (John Noel's article in Asia, Oct. 1930).

The flight of Jesus, therefore to India and his death in Srinagar is not foreign to the truth rationally or historically" (Tafsir al-Manār, vol. 6).

The following facts clearly emerge from the above quotations and historical references:

1. The tomb in Khanyar street in Srinagar is variously described as that of Nabī Ṣāhib, Īsā Ṣāhib, Shahzāda Nabī and that of Yūz Āsaf.

2. This Yūz Āsaf was a Prophet of the People of the Book, being a spiritual descendant of Moses.

3. He came to Kashmir from a far-off land.

4. He was called a Prince (Jesus was also known as Prince of Peace).

5. He talked in proverbs and parables (so did Jesus).

6. He was not a follower of Islam as no Prophet, according to Muslim belief, had appeared after the Holy Prophet.

7. He was a Jew, because the name Yūz Āsaf is a Hebrew name.

In view of the above-mentioned facts it is not possible to deny that Jesus did come to the East to preach to the Lost Tribes of Israel, and that Yūz Āsaf is Jesus and that the tomb in Khanyar street is that of Jesus. For a better

and fuller treatment, however, of this subject see "Masīḥ Hindustān Main" by Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah. See also the well-known book, "Nazarene Gospel Restored," whose authors maintain that though officially crucified in A.D. 30, Jesus was still alive some twenty years after the Resurrection.

There could be no better description of the place, where Jesus and his mother, after his deliverance from accursed death on the Cross, lived in peace and tranquillity and then went to their eternal rest, than in the Quranic words, viz., ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ (having meadows and springs of running water), which is quite an apt description of the beautiful valley of Kashmir which is full of green meadows and of springs and streams running with fresh, sweet water.

2545. Commentary :

The fact that there exists a deep and subtle connection between the food that a person eats and his actions good or bad has now begun to be increasingly recognized by medical science. But Islam laid down as far back as 1400 years directions and instructions relating to food which possess great moral significance. While it is admitted that the properties of vegetables and mineral foods have their effect upon man, there is no reason why a man should not be affected by peculiar habits of an animal whose flesh he frequently eats. It has been established that the eating of the flesh of certain animals encourages unnatural vice and sexual perversions. Further research in this direction will confirm the principle on which Islamic restrictions and

53. And *know* ^athat this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So take Me as *your* Protector.²⁵⁴⁶

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ
فَاتَّقُونِ ⑤٣

54. But ^bthey (the people) have cut up their affairs among themselves *forming themselves into parties*, each group rejoicing in what they have.²⁵⁴⁷

فَنَقَطَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ
فَرِحُونَ ⑤٤

55. So ^cleave them in their confusion for a time.

فَذَرْهُمْ فِي غَمَرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ⑤٥

56. Do they think that by the wealth and children with which We help them,

أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّنَا نُنِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ⑤٦

^a 21 : 93. ^b 2 : 94. ^c 70 : 43 ; 73 : 12.

regulations concerning food are based. The basic principle laid down by Islam is that as man must develop all his natural instincts and faculties, therefore he should partake of all kinds of food, except those that are likely to do him physical, moral or spiritual harm. The use of pure and good food produces healthy mental condition which in turn produces good and righteous actions. It is to this great scientific truth that the words "and do good deeds" point, and thus by recognizing that food exerts a powerful influence on man's morals Islam has subjected it to certain limits and conditions.

The word الرسل (Messengers) includes their followers also. The commandments given to the Messengers and Prophets of God are meant for their followers also.

2546. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that all the Messengers of God formed one brotherhood, i.e. they

came from the same Divine Source and their basic teachings were more or less identical and the object and purpose of their advent was one and the same and that object was to establish upon earth Unity of God and oneness of humanity, and also to teach men to look up to God as their only Lord and Protector. But mankind which had started as one community became split up into sects and sections at variance with one another, till God in His own good time raised the greatest of the Prophets—Muhammad, and entrusted him with the great mission of uniting all the warring religions and Faiths and of welding them into one. Thus the object of the advent of all Divine Messengers found its complete consummation in the mission of the Holy Prophet.

2547. Commentary :

It is a sad story repeated again and again in the history of every religion that after the departure of a Prophet his followers begin to

57. We hasten to do them good ?
Nay, but they understand not.²⁵⁴⁸

58. Verily, those ^awho fear their
Lord, *holding Him* in reverence,²⁵⁴⁹

59. And those who believe in the
Signs of their Lord,

60. And those who ascribe not part-
ners to their Lord,

61. And those who give what they
give while ^btheir hearts are full of
fear because to their Lord they will
return—²⁵⁵⁰

نَسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ
إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

^a79 : 41. ^b22 : 36.

differ among themselves and become split up into sects and sections, every sect regarding itself as the true follower of their Prophet and other sects as devoid of all truth, while the fact remains that every sect possesses some elements of truth. This is one meaning of the verse. The other meaning may be that the followers of every Prophet have always looked upon the followers of other religions as devoid of all truth while the truth is that all religions have proceeded from the same Divine Source and therefore their teachings possess a substantial measure of truth, though the whole and perfect truth is to be found in a religion which combines in its teaching all that is best in other religions. That religion is Islam.

2548. Commentary :

Man is so constituted that he regards abundance of wealth and the power and prestige of his party as the measure of his success and even as the only criterion of his being the recipient of God's favour. It is this common error

which the present and the preceding verse seek to correct.

2549. Commentary :

In the present and the next few verses have been mentioned the attributes and characteristics of those Elect and Beloved of God who attain true success in life and are the real recipients of Divine favours and blessings. They may not have wealth and may not acquire material strength and power, though these things also fall to the lot of the followers of Divine prophets, yet they do succeed in their life-mission which is to establish righteousness on earth and to implant the love of God in the hearts of men. They leave behind them a community of devoted followers who after their departure from this world carry on their mission with zeal, sincerity and perseverance.

2550. Commentary :

Though true believers spend their wealth in the way of Allah and give it with both hands, yet they are afraid lest not having come up to

62. These it is who hasten to do good works, and these it is who are foremost in them.²⁵⁵¹

63. And "We burden not any soul beyond its capacity, ^band with Us is a Book that speaks the truth, and they will not be wronged."²⁵⁵²

أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

وَلَا نَكُلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنْطِقُ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

^a7 : 43. ^b17 : 14-15, 45 : 30 ; 69 : 20.

the required standard they might be called to account for not doing all that they were expected to do.

2551. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the good works which lead a people to real success are those which are mentioned in the preceding four verses and not, as the disbelievers think, the wealth and numbers of one's party and group. The true believers not only do all these good works with the best of their power and capacity but try to excel each other in doing good to others.

2552. Important Words :

حق means, a truth; an established fact or truth which is undeniable; a thing that is decreed or destined; a right, equity and justice; a thing suitable to the requirements of justice, wisdom; etc. (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2: 43, 148, 181; 3: 4; 7: 106. According to Imām Rāghib the word الحق is also used in the sense of making the *Shari'at* complete and perfect. It is in this sense that it has been used in the verse, "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of truth (دين الحق) that He may cause it to prevail over all religions (61 : 10).

Commentary :

In the preceding verse the believers were urged to excel one another in doing good deeds.

The present verse tells us that the laws which God has laid down in the Qur'ān for the moral and spiritual development of man are such as are within his power and capacity to act upon. They are suited to all conditions, circumstances, temperaments and dispositions. Thus the *Shari'at* is not a curse but a great blessing for man. Yet it is not given to every individual to act upon all its laws fully and completely. He is expected to live up to his ideals to the best of his power and he will only be called upon to account for the actions or deeds which were within his power to do or avoid, and all the conditions and circumstances under which he had to labour and toil will also be taken into consideration by God when measuring the worth of his actions and rewarding him. This supreme truth is pointed out in the Quranic words: الوزن يومئذ الحق, "And the weighing on that day will be true (7 : 9).

The word كتاب (Book) in the clause كتابك ينطق بالحق, according to some Commentators of the Qur'ān signifies the record of man's deeds and actions referred to in 50 : 19 or to "the guarded tablet" mentioned in 85 : 23, but in view of the meaning of the word حق as given by Rāghib under "Important Words" above, the expression "and with Us is a Book that speaks the truth," may also signify (1) that the teaching embodied in the Qur'ān is based

64. Nay, ^atheir hearts are utterly heedless of this *Book*, and they have deeds besides that in which they are engaged ;²⁵⁵³

65. Until, ^bwhen We seize those of them who indulge in luxury with punishment, behold, they cry for help.²⁵⁵⁴

66. ^cCry not for help this day, surely you shall not be helped by Us.^{2554A}

67. ^dVerily, ^eMy Signs were recited unto you, but you used to turn back on your heels,

بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْمَالٌ
مِّنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَمِلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِمْ بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ
يَجْرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

لَا تَجْرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُمْ مِّمَّا لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

قَدْ كَانَتْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ آعْقَابِكُمْ
تَنكِصُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

^a21 : 4. ^b10 : 23 ; 16 : 54 ; 30 : 34 ; 39 : 9. ^c21 : 14. ^d22 : 73 ; 39 : 46.

on wisdom and is suited to all conditions, and circumstances, and to men of different temperaments and dispositions and is in agreement with the requirements of justice, equity and wisdom, and (2) that it is the last revealed Law for the whole of mankind and therefore can quite legitimately claim to enjoy superiority over all other Divine Books.

2553. Important Words :

^aغمره (heedlessness) is derived from غمر. They say غمر الماء i.e. the water was or became much in quantity or deep so that it concealed its bottom. غمره الماء means, the water was abundant so that it came over him or covered him. غمر also means, he abounded in beneficence. غمره means, water that rises above the stature of a man ; difficulty, trouble or rigour. غمره الموت means, the agony of death. فذرهم غمرتهم means, therefore leave them in their

ignorance ; or in their error and obstinacy and perplexity ; in their overwhelming heedlessness or ignorance (Lane & Aqrab).

2554. Important Words :

جار (they cry for help) is derived from جأر which means, he (a bull) lowed. جأر الى الله means, he raised his voice in prayer or supplication ; he cried out or called for help ; he humbled himself with earnest supplication to God. جأرت الارض means, the herbage of the land grew tall (Lane & Aqrab).

For مترف see 11 : 117 & 17 : 17.

2554 A. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that disbelievers cry for help and repent and lament after Divine punishment has actually overtaken them but then it is too late because punishment comes upon a people only after they have seen Heavenly

68. 'Big with pride, "telling stories about it (the Qur'ān) by night, talking nonsense.'²⁵⁵⁵

مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ۖ بِهِ سِيرًا تَهْجُرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

69. Have they not, then, pondered over the *Divine* Word, or has that come unto them which came not to their fathers of old ?²⁵⁵⁶

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ
آبَاءَهُمْ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

83 : 14.

Signs and after the falsity of their position has been convincingly brought home to them by sound and solid arguments and they continue to persist in rejecting the truth and persecuting their Prophet.

2555. Important Words :

سَامِرًا (telling stories by night) is derived from سَمِرَ which means, he held a conversation or discourse by night ; he waked ; continued awake ; did not sleep. سَمِرَ الْخَمْرَ means, he drank wine by night. سَامِرُهُ means, he held a conversation or discourse with him by night. سَامِرٌ means, a man holding or one who holds a conversation or discourse by night ; a person waking or continuing to be awake or one who did not sleep. تَرَكْتَهُمْ سَامِرًا means, I left them while they were holding a conversation by night (Lane & Aqrab).

تَهْجُرُونَ (talking nonsense) is derived from هَجَرَ. They say هَجَرَا وَهَجَرَ فِي كَلَامِهِ i.e. he talked nonsense ; he talked foolishly or deliriously. See also 4 : 35. هَجَرَ فِي مَرَضِهِ أَوْ نَوْمِهِ means, he talked nonsense or deliriously in his sickness or sleep. The Quranic words سَامِرًا تَهْجُرُونَ mean, holding discourse by night, talking nonsense or foolishly (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The expression مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ may signify that disbelievers regard the revelation of the Qur'ān to be too big and important an affair to be entrusted to a weak human being. In the latter case it may mean that when disbelievers hear the Qur'ān being recited they turn away from it in pride and arrogance. The latter meaning which is preferable is given in the text.

2556. Important Words :

أَمْ (or) possesses a variety of meanings, some of which are the following:

It is a conjunction connected with what precedes it so that neither what precedes it nor what follows it is independent, the one of the other. It denotes interrogation or is used in a case of interrogation corresponding to the interrogative أَيْ and meaning أَيْ. They say أَيْ زَيْدٌ أَمْ فِي الدَّارِ أَمْ عَمْرُو i.e. is Zaid in the house or 'Amr i.e. which of the two (أَيُّهُمَا), therefore what follows أَمْ and what precedes it compose one sentence and what follows it must correspond to what precedes it in the quality of noun and of verb. They say أَمْ أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ i.e. whether

70. Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they *thus* deny him?²⁵⁵⁷

أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. Or "do they say, 'there is madness in him?' Nay, he has brought them the truth, and most of them hate the truth."²⁵⁵⁸

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَاءَهُمُ بِالْحَقِّ وَكَرَهُهُمُ
لِلْحَقِّ كِرْهُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

a7 : 185 ; 34 : 47.

أ زيد (2: 7). thou warn them or warn them not (2: 7). *أ زيد* means, is Zaid standing or sitting? It is also used as simple interrogative in the sense of هل as in *أم كنتم شهداء* i.e. were you present? (2 : 134)

Commentary :

The verse means to say, why do not disbelievers understand this simple thing that the Holy Prophet's Message is no new thing. It is the same Message which from time immemorial the Prophets of God have been bringing in the world, the self-same Message which was given to the forefathers of these people.

2557. Commentary :

The verse embodies an appeal to the good sense and reasonableness of the opponents of the Holy Prophet. It tells them that his whole life lies like an open book before them. They are quite familiar with all its different phases. It is spotless. For years they have known him as an honest man, a model of virtue and uprightness and yet they dare ascribe falsehood to him. See also 10 : 17.

2558. Commentary :

This verse continues the theme of the preceding one and embodies a repudiation of the foolish charge of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet has been smitten with insanity, and mentions also the cause and reason for their denial of him. It throws a challenge to them by saying that there could possibly be no insanity or madness about the Holy Prophet inasmuch as maniacs have never produced such wonderful results as he has done. He has changed the whole face of Arabia. Nor have the teachings of madmen or impostors offered such satisfactory solutions of all the difficult human moral, social and economic problems as the Qur'an has done. The verse gives the reason for the disbelievers' rejection of the Message of Islam in the words that they hate the truth, meaning thereby that they know that by accepting it they will have to undergo untold hardships and privations and to suffer loss of power, prestige and property. This they by no means are prepared to do.

72. And if the Truth had followed their desires, verily the heavens and the earth and whosoever is therein would have been corrupted. Nay, "We have brought them their admonition, but from their own admonition they *now* turn aside."²⁵⁵⁹

73. "Or dost thou ask of them any reward? But the reward of thy Lord is best; and He is the Best of providers."²⁵⁶⁰

74. And most surely thou invitest them to a right path.

وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ
وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَجَ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْزَّادِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٩﴾

21 : 3. 52 : 41 ; 68 : 47.

2559. Important Words :

ذكرهم (their admonition). ذكر means, remembrance or presence of a thing in the mind ; admonition, exhortation, reminder ; a book containing an exposition of religion ; mentioning or relating a thing ; praise or glorification of God ; praying and supplicating to Him ; dispraise or evil speech ; praise or eulogy of another ; eminence, nobility, honour (Aqrab & Lane). See also 12 : 105 ; 15 : 7 ; 16 : 45, etc.

Commentary :

The word الحق meaning "the Truth" here may refer to God or the Qur'ān. As referring to the Qur'ān the verse would mean that the law of nature will continue to work in the Holy Prophet's favour and the caravan of truth will march on much against the wishes of disbelievers. The Qur'ān is intended to bring its addressees honour and eminence but by refusing to accept it they are digging their grave with their own hands.

2560. Important Words :

خرج (reward) is derived from خرج which means, he came or went out or departed. خرج means, disbursement or expenditure ; what goes out or is expended of a man's property ; a poll-tax, recompense or reward. خراج means, a tax or tribute that is taken from the property of people ; a tax upon land ; an impost ; a poll-tax ; reward or recompense ; the taste of fruit (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Could there be any better evidence of the Holy Prophet's sincerity of motives and honesty of purpose and of his complete disregard for any recompense or reward for his selfless service than the answer he gave to his kind and loving uncle Abū Ṭālib when, on being pressed by the Quraishite leaders, Abū Ṭālib asked the Holy Prophet to make a compromise with the idolaters and give up preaching against idol-worship? The never-to-be-forgotten answer which the Holy Prophet gave to his uncle was :

75. And those who believe not in the Hereafter, are indeed deviating from that path.^{2560 A}

وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ
لَنَكْبُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

76. "And if We had mercy on them and relieved them of their affliction, they would still persist in their transgression, wandering blindly.²⁵⁶¹

وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِنْ ضُرٍّ لَلَجُوا
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

77. "We did seize them with punishment, but they humbled not themselves to their Lord, nor would they supplicate in lowliness.²⁵⁶²

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ
وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

78. "Until, when We open on them a door of severe chastisement, lo ! they are in despair thereat.²⁵⁶³

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ
إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

^{a7} ; 136 ; 43 ; 51.

^{b6} : 44.

^{c6} : 45.

"If they were to place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left and ask me to give up preaching against idolatry, I will never do so ill my mission is fulfilled or I perish in the attempt (Ṭabarī, vol. 3).

2560A. Important Words :

ناكب (deviating) is the plural of نكب which is active participle from نكب. They say نكب عن الطريق (nakiba) i.e. he deviated or turned aside from the path. نكب الرجل means, the shoulder of the man complained of pain. نكب البعير means, the camel suffered from a disease of the shoulder (Aqrab).

2561. Important Words :

للاجوا (they would still persist in) is plural form of لج which means, he persisted or persevered in an affair or he persisted obstinately in an affair, even if it became manifest that it was

wrong ; he persisted in contention, litigation or wrangling (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Man is so constituted that when he is in comfort and easy circumstances, he throws all caution to the winds and begins to indulge in unseemly conduct. But when his transgression and wicked pursuits produce evil results, then he gives himself up to despair. It is to this natural disposition of man that reference has been made in this verse.

2562. Important Words :

For استكانوا (humbled themselves) see 3: 147.

2563. Important Words :

مبلسون (they are in despair) is active participle from أبلس which means, he despaired or

5 79. And He it is Who has "created for you ears, and eyes, and hearts ; but little thanks do you give.²⁵⁶⁴

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

^a16 : 79 ; 67 : 24.

gave up hope of God's mercy ; he became broken-spirited ; he was or became silent, returning no reply by reason of grief or despair ; he was or became confounded or perplexed and unable to see argument ; etc., (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 35.

Commentary :

One of the objects for which God sends down afflictions and visitations on rejectors of truth is that they should become humble and by repenting of their evil ways and by listening to the Divine message should draw God's mercy on themselves. The time of a heavenly Messenger is particularly marked with heavenly visitations. On the other hand, in time of prosperity, people are proud and arrogant and become entirely engrossed in worldly affairs. They pay little heed to the voice of truth. So God afflicts them with miseries and misfortunes in order that their pride might be broken. Elsewhere the Qur'ān says : "*And indeed We sent Messengers to peoples before thee, then We afflicted them with poverty and adversity that they might humble themselves* (6 : 43)." But such is the perversity of human nature that in spite of afflictions man persists in his wicked ways and refuses to give ear to the Divine Messenger ; respite and reprieve only increase him in transgression. When, however, Divine punishment overtakes him, then he is all despair.

Besides the present verse the Qur'ān adverts

again and again to the subject that persistent rejection of Divine message never goes unpunished. It has also not omitted to throw adequate light on factors which intimately concern the subject of Divine punishment, viz., (1) while awarding punishment to a wrong-doing person God takes into consideration all the various circumstances and conditions which contributed and led to the commission of the evil deeds (7 : 9). (2) Everyone has to carry his own cross and no one else but the guilty person himself has to account and suffer for his evil deeds (6 : 165). (3) The punishment of the evil deed is strictly commensurate with the nature and scope of the crime (42 : 41). (4) No intercession can benefit the guilty person and no ransom is taken from him (2 : 49). (5) But God's mercy always outweighs His wrath (7 : 157). (6) When good deeds outnumber evil ones, the entire punishment is remitted (7 : 9)."

2564. Commentary :

One of the several meanings of شكر is to make proper use of a Divine gift (14 : 8). In view of this meaning of the word the verse would mean that God has given us ears, eyes and hearts that we may make proper use of them and benefit thereby materially and spiritually. He has given us eyes that we may observe His Signs ; He has given us ears that we may listen to the Divine message and to the teaching and preaching of His Prophets and He

80. And He it is Who has multiplied you in the earth, and unto Him shall you be gathered.²⁵⁶⁵

وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. And He it is Who gives life and causes death, and *"in His hand"* is the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?²⁵⁶⁶

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلَافُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. But they say like what the former people said.²⁶⁶⁷

بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالِ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

٨٢ : 165 ; 3 : 191 ; 10 : 7.

has endowed us with understanding that we may seriously ponder over the arguments which heavenly Messengers give in support of their claims. About those who do not make a proper use of these great gifts the Qur'ān says : "they have hearts but they understand not therewith and they have eyes but they see not therewith, and they have ears but they hear not therewith. They have degraded themselves to the level of beasts, they are more degraded than even cattle" (7 : 180).

2565. Commentary :

The verse develops the theme of its predecessor, viz., that God has endowed man with reason and understanding and with the faculties of seeing and hearing. By making proper use of these gifts he could easily understand that his life possesses a great and noble object and that the fulfilment of that object implies that there is a life after death and that men "shall be gathered unto God," to render an account of their works.

2566. Commentary :

This verse embodies another argument in

support of the theme touched in the preceding verse. It alludes to the phenomenon of the rise and fall of nations. At one time a people rise to power and eminence and the sun of progress and prosperity shines upon them, at another time decadence and death overtake them as a consequence of their evil deeds. The verse under comment seems to convey a warning to disbelievers that the sun of their power and grandeur is about to set and another people—the Muslims, who are now weak and powerless, are destined to rise to greatness. The coming to pass of this apparently impossible phenomenon, will prove the truth of another phenomenon viz., that there is a life after the present life.

2567. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that disbelievers continue to harp on the old tune that after they are reduced to dust, their coming to life again was an impossible thing and that it was an old story which they and their forebears had been hearing from very old times.

83. They say, 'What ! "when we are dead and have become *mere* dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised up again ?

قَالُوا إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. ^b"This is what we have been promised before, we and our fathers. This is nothing but fables of the ancients.'

لَقَدْ وَعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَآبَاؤُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِن هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. Say, 'To whom belongs the earth and whosoever is therein, if you know ?'²⁵⁶⁸

قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. 'To Allah,' they will say. Say, 'Will you not then be admonished?'

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. Say, 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Great Throne ?'

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. They will say, '*They are Allah's.*' Say, 'Will you not then take *Him* as your Protector ?'²⁵⁶⁹

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

^a 17 : 99 ; 27 : 68 ; 37 : 17 ; 56 : 48. ^b 27 : 69.

2568. Commentary :

With this verse the *Sūra* reverts to the subject of the Unity of God and draws particular attention to God's attributes of creation, Lordship and Sovereignty in support of this doctrine. It purports to say that when God alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and to Him alone belongs the kingdom and sovereignty of the heavens and the earth it is foolish to associate anyone else with Him. This argu-

ment has been enlarged and developed in the following verses.

2569. Important Words :

اتقى (take as your protector) is from اتقى فلائاً which means, he became God-fearing. اتقى فلائاً means, he feared such a one and was on his guard against him and avoided him. They say اتقىنا به i.e. while facing an enemy we placed him in front of us shielding or protecting ourselves by him (Aqrab). See also 2 : 3.

89. Say, "In Whose hand is the dominion over all things and Who protects, but against Whom there is no protection, if you know ?"²⁵⁷⁰

قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ٨٩

90. They will say, 'All this belongs to Allah.' Say, 'How then are you deluded ?'²⁵⁷¹

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ ٩٠

91. Yea, We have brought them the truth, and they are certainly liars.

بَلْ آتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَانَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ٩١

92. ^bAllah has not taken unto Himself any son, nor is there any *other* god along with Him ; in that case each god would have taken away what he had created, and some of them would surely have dominated over others. Glorified be Allah above all that which they attribute *to Him* !²⁵⁷²

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَنَ اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ٩٢

^a36 : 86 ^b18 : 5 ; 19 : 36 ; 21 : 27 ; 25 : 3 ; 39 : 5 ; 43 : 82 ; 72 : 4. ^c21 : 23.

2570. Important Words :

ملكوت (dominion) is derived from ملك (malaka). They say ملك الشيء i.e. he possessed the thing and had complete control over it. ملك على القوم means, he became the ruler of the people. ملك المرأة means, he married the woman or became her husband. ملكوت means, great kingdom; honour ; complete control; argument (Lane & Aqrab). See also 1 : 4 and 6 : 76.

يجير (He grants protection) is derived from جار which is further derived from جار which means, he pursued a wrong course; he acted unjustly. أجاره means, he protected him; granted him refuge ; he delivered him from evil ; he aided or assisted him ; he rescued him. استجاره means, he sought his protection. لا يجار

عليه means, He grants protection but protection cannot be had against Him or against His will (Lane & Aqrab).

2571. Important Words :

أنى (how) signifies whence ; where ; when ; and how. In the present verse the word has been used in the sense of 'whence' and 'how.'

2572. Commentary :

In brief words the verse very effectively demonstrates the futility and falsity of the Christian dogma that Jesus is God's son. It purports to say that a son is needed by one to help him to carry on his affairs, but as God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Sole Master and Controller of the whole universe, He does not need the help or assistance of any

93. "Knower of the unseen and of the seen ! Exalted is He above *all* that which they associate *with Him*!"²⁵⁷³

6 94. Say, 'My Lord, if Thou wilt show me that with which they are threatened,

95. 'My Lord, then place me not with the wrongdoing people.'²⁵⁷⁴

96. And certainly ^bWe have the power to show thee that with which We threaten them.²⁵⁷⁵

عَلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعْلَمَ مَا يَشُرُّونَ ۚ ٩٣

قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيدُنِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ ٩٤

رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ٩٥

وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُرِيدَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ ٩٦

^a6 : 74 ; 32 : 7 ; 34 : 4 ; 59 : 23 ; 64 : 19. ^b40 : 78.

helper or son. Moreover, the whole universe appears to be subject to one uniform law and the unity of the design and purpose and control points to the unity of the Designer and the Controller. The duality of control and authority implies confusion and disorder. See also 17 : 43 & 21 : 23.

2573. Commentary :

The verse gives another argument against Jesus's godhead, viz., that the Creator and Controller of the universe must possess complete knowledge of His creation but Jesus himself confesses to his knowledge being defective and incomplete (Mark 13 : 32).

2574. Commentary :

This and the next verse constitute at once a prayer and a prophecy. The present *Sūra* was revealed towards the end of the Meccan period. The Holy Prophet was about to leave Mecca. His departure from Mecca was a signal and a sign that as the result of persistent denial and persecution and of his expulsion from his beloved native town by the Meccans, Divine

punishment was about to overtake them. In this verse the Holy Prophet is taught to pray to God that when the threatened punishment should seize the Meccans he might not be among them in Mecca. While on the one hand the actual words of the verse, viz., "My Lord then place me not among the wrongdoing people" expressed a prayer, on the other, they implied a prophecy that when actual punishment overtook the Meccans the Prophet would be far away from the scene of punishment. These words may also mean: "My Lord, grant that I may not be of the wrongdoing people when these people are punished by Thee, and grant that when I get mastery over them I should act with justice and equity on that occasion." By implication the verse admonishes Muslims that in the hour of their victory they should not behave proudly and arrogantly towards their vanquished and humbled enemies.

2575. Commentary :

This verse confirms the fulfilment of the prophecy and the prayer embodied in vv. 94, 95 above. The expression لَقَادِرُونَ (are able to do) which points to the Almighty

97. "Repel evil with that which is best. We are well acquainted with the things they allege;"²⁵⁷⁶

إِذْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

^a13 : 23 ; 16 : 126 ; 41 : 35.

of God emphasizes the fact that the prayer and prophecy of the Holy Prophet embodied in the preceding two verses shall certainly be fulfilled.

2576. Commentary :

In the preceding two verses we were told that punishment was about to overtake disbelievers and that at the time of that punishment the Holy Prophet would be far away from the scene of punishment. In the present verse, however, the Prophet is enjoined that as long as he is with disbelievers he should patiently bear up with all the abuse and persecution to which he is subjected and should return good for evil.

Incidentally, the verse points to a very noble principle inculcated by Islam for the moral progress of a Muslim and also for the establishment and preservation of peace and harmony among individuals and nations. The subject has been dealt with at some length in 16 : 91 and 42:41 where light is shed on all the different stages of the moral development of man. Briefly, there are three stages of man's moral development, viz., of عدل i.e. doing good to others to the extent or measure of the good received from them; of إحسان which means the doing of more good than the good received or doing good without receiving any good; and of إيتاء ذى القربى which consists in doing good not in return of any good received, but as prompted by natural impulse. This is one aspect of moral development of man which the Qur'ān has dealt

with in 16 : 91. But there is another equally important aspect and the Qur'ān has not omitted to deal with it also. Compared to the above-mentioned three different ways in which a Muslim is enjoined to conduct himself when he does good to other people, the Qur'ān enjoins upon him a parallel conduct when he receives an injury. He may return evil to the extent and measure of the injury he has received or he may punish the evil-doer if he is in a position to do so but the punishment should, under no circumstances, exceed legitimate bounds. Moreover, the punishment is to be resorted to only if this course is calculated to produce wholesome effect upon the aggressor party. This is the significance of the words, *the recompense of evil is evil like it* (42: 41). The Qur'ān, however, prefers and recommends that forgiveness should be shown to the evil-doer. This is the meaning of the words, *but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah* (42: 41). But a Muslim who has attained to a very high moral standard is enjoined not only to forgive the person who has done him some wrong but also to do him a good turn in addition. This is the significance of the verse under comment and this is the high moral standard of conduct expected of a Muslim by Islam. Islam enjoins the repelling of evil with evil or with forgiveness or with a kind return, which of the three courses is calculated to conduce to the moral good of the wrong-doer, or the good of the injured person or to the good of human society at large.

98. And say, 'My Lord, I seek refuge in Thee from the incitements of the evil ones,'²⁵⁷⁷

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝٩٨

99. 'And I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord, lest they come near me.'

وَاَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ اَنْ يَحْضُرُوْنِ ۝٩٩

100. Until, when death comes to one of them, "he says *entreating repeatedly*, 'My Lord, send me back,'²⁵⁷⁸

حَتّٰى اِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُوْنِ ۝١٠٠

101. 'That I may do righteous deeds in the life that I have left behind.' That cannot be. It is but a word that he utters. ^bAnd behind them is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again.²⁵⁷⁹

لَعَلِّيْ اَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فَيُنْزَلُ عَلَيَّ كَلِمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ ۝١٠١
هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَآئِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ اِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ۝١٠٢

^a 39 : 59. ^b 21 : 96 ; 36 : 32.

2577. Important Words :

همزات (incitements) is the plural of همزة which is derived from همز. They say همزه *i.e.* he pressed it; squeezed it; pinched it; he impelled or repelled him or it; he beat him; he goaded him or urged him; he broke it; he suggested evil to his mind; he incited him. همز or همزة means, madness or insanity; the evil suggestion of evil persons which they inspire into the minds of men; inciting (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In the expression "from the incitements of the evil ones," the words "evil ones" refer to the leading men among the Holy Prophet's enemies, and "incitements" signifies the campaign of vilification and misrepresentation by which they sought to incite the people against him. The context bears out this meaning of the words 'evil ones.' The Holy Prophet had enjoyed full protection of God and therefore was completely immune to the influence and evil suggestions of Satan, hence the question of his being subject to the incitements of the evil ones does not arise. The

Prophet's شيطان (Evil Spirit) had lost all power to do mischief to him (Muslim, *kitāb Ṣifāt al-Munāfiqīn*). The Prophet had found complete refuge in his Lord.

2578. Commentary :

The plural form ارجعون affords an instance of the marvellous beauty of the Quranic style. The disbeliever addressing God uses the plural form of the verb to express the Majesty and Greatness of God and out of respect for Him.

The plural form ارجعون may also represent the repetition of the singular form ارجعني (*irj'ini i.e. send me back*). The disbeliever in his perplexity and confusion continues to repeat his request again and again for being sent back to this world and these repeated requests have been expressed by the use of the plural form. Thus the plural form ارجعون expresses, on the one hand, the disbeliever's confusion of mind, on the other, it expresses his respect for God.

2579. Important Words :

برزخ means, a barrier; a bar; a thing that

102. And when "the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them that day, nor will they ask after one another."²⁵⁸⁰

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. Then those ^b whose scale are heavy *with good works*—these will be prosperous;²⁵⁸¹

فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

^a 18 : 100; 36 : 52; 50 : 21; 69 : 14. ^b 7 : 9; 101 : 7 - 8.

intervenes between any two things; an obstruction or a thing that separates two things; the interval from the time of death to the Day of Resurrection. The word is technically applied to the period or state from the day of death to the Day of Resurrection (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The word لعل (that) conveys the idea of doubt. As used here the word shows that the disbeliever will have been so deeply impressed by God's Greatness and Majesty and his own insignificance that he dare not declare with certainty that he will make amends for what he had left undone in life on earth. He only expresses a hope that he will do righteous deeds if he were sent back to this world.

The word كلمة has been used in the verse, as at several other places in the Qur'ān, in the sense of a full sentence. The Holy Prophet also used the word in the sense of a complete sentence in the well-known ḥadīth :

أصدق كلمة قالها لبید، الا كل شیء ما خلا الله باطل
i.e. the truest sentence is the one which the poet Labīd uttered and which is to the effect, "Everything besides God is subject to destruction." See also 4 : 172.

The verse incidentally disproves a commonly

held belief that a man passes into Heaven or Hell immediately after his death. In fact after death he lives in برزخ which is an intermediate state of incomplete realization of the punishments or rewards of Hell or Heaven or a state of preparation for their complete and full realization. The Qur'ān has compared *barzakh* to the embryonic state and the Resurrection to the birth of the fully developed soul.

2580. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when punishment overtakes a people, nobility of pedigree, descent or relationship proves of no avail. On the Judgment Day also good works alone will be of use or benefit to man and not his blood relations or friendships.

2581. Important Words :

ميزان (good works) is the plural of ميزان (a balance) and موزون (a thing that is weighed) and is derived from وزن. They say وزن الشیء i.e. he weighed the thing or he determined or estimated the weight of the thing. وزن الشیء means, the thing became heavy and weighty. وزن means, the act of weighing, or the weight of a thing, or weightiness. وزن الرجل means, the man was of weighty opinion (Aqrab & Lane).

104. But those ^awhose scales are light for lack of good works—these are they who ruin their souls ; in Hell will they abide.

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. ^bThe Fire will burn their faces and they will grin with fear therein. ²⁵⁸²

تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

106. ^c“Were not My Signs recited unto you, and you treated them as lies ?”

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَتَىٰ تَتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا
تُكذِّبُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. They will say, ‘Our Lord, our wickedness overcame us, and we were an erring people;

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا
ضَالِّينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. ‘Our Lord, ^dtake us out of this, then if we return to disobedience, we shall indeed be wrongdoers.’

رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. God will say, “Away with you, despised therein, and speak not unto Me; ²⁵⁸³

قَالَ اخْسَؤْا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ ﴿١٠٩﴾

^a7 : 10; 101 : 9—10. ^b10 : 28; 14 : 51; 54 : 49; 80 : 42. ^c40 : 51; 45 : 32; 67 : 9. ^d6 : 28.

Commentary :

See 7 : 9-10.

2582. Important Words :

تلفح (will burn) is derived from لَفَح . They say لَفَحَتِ النَّارُ i.e. the fire scorched his face; the fire burned him. لَفَحَهُ means, he smote or struck him with a sword. لَوَافِحُ السُّمُومِ means, the burning blasts (Lane & Aqrab).

كالحون (they will grin) is the plural of كَالِح which is derived from كَلَح which means, he frightened him. كَلَحَ فِي وَجْهِهِ means, he frightened him with grinning, severe-looking or frowning. دَهْرُ كَالِح means, severe time (Lane & Aqrab).

2583. Important Words :

اخسؤوا (away with you despised) is derived from خَسَأَ which means, he was or became vile and despised and hated. They say خَسَأَ الْكَلْبُ i.e. he drove away the dog. خَسَأَ الْبَصَرُ means, the sight was or became dazzled or confused, or dim. خَسِئَ means, despised or hated; confused, dazzled or dim (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The despisers and haers of God's Messengers will be dragged into Hell-fire hated and despised and will not be allowed to offer an explanation of the wicked deeds they would have committed in their lives, God being fully conversant with their doings.

110. "There was a party from among My servants who said, "Our Lord, we believe ; forgive us therefore *our sins*, and have mercy on us ; for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy."

111. "But you made them a laughing-stock until they became the cause of your forgetting My remembrance while you *continued to* laugh at them."²⁵⁸⁴

112. "I have rewarded them this day for their steadfastness so that they alone have triumphed."

113. *God will then say*, 'What number of years did you tarry in the earth ?'

114. They will say, 'We tarried for a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep count.'²⁵⁸⁵

إِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا
فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

فَاتَّخَذَ تَوَهُؤُهُمْ سَخِرِيًّا حَتَّىٰ أَنْسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ
مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

قُلْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾

قَالُوا لَيْسَ بِنَاوِمًا أَوْ بَعْضُ يَوْمٍ فَسَلِ الْعَادِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

3 : 17, 194

2584. Important Words :

سَخِرِيَّا (laughing stock) is derived from سَخَرَ. They say سَخَرْتَهُ i.e. he mocked at, laughed at, derided or ridiculed him, سَخَرَتِ السَّفِينَةُ means, the ship had a good wind and voyage; it obeyed and ran its course. سَخَرَهُ (sakhkhara) means, he compelled him to do what he did not like; or to work without recompense, hire or wages. سَخَرَى سَخَرَى (sikhriyyun) means mockery; scoff; derision; ridicule; one who is mocked at, scoffed at, derided or ridiculed; one who is compelled to work against his will, without wages or compensation (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 165 ; 2 : 213.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that the believers were weak and the disbelievers strong and powerful. In the pride of their power and wealth the latter

mocked at the poor believers and indulged so much in this unseemly business of scoffing and mocking at them that they lost all sense of propriety and dignity and even forgot their responsibilities and duties to God. Thus the poverty of the believers became the cause of the disbelievers indulging in mockery and consigning God to oblivion

The verse also means that the believers being poor and weak, the disbelievers employed them against their will or desire, exploited them and exacted compulsory service from them without paying them any wages or compensation for the work they did.

2585. Commentary :

A whole life spent in ease and comfort, when followed by pain and punishment, appears very short and even becomes a source of regret and

115. He will say, 'You tarried but a little, if only you knew !²⁵⁸⁶

116. 'Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us ?'²⁵⁸⁷

قُلْ إِنْ لَيْسَ لَكُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْ نَّاسٍ لَّيْسَ لَكُم مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا

تَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

mortification. The verse purports to say that when disbelievers will leave behind a life spent in luxury in this world and will be brought face to face with Divine punishment and then will be confronted with the question as to how long they lived in the world, they will feel as if they had lived only for a day or even part of a day and will say so. The reply of disbelievers shows how vain and short-lived are the comforts of this life.

2586. Commentary :

The Divine rejoinder to disbelievers will be that worldly life and its pleasures or comforts were indeed transitory and very short-lived but they had never realized this fact and so kept on indulging in idle pursuits and mocking at God's Messengers and their followers as if there would be no end to this life. If they had only realized the transitoriness of this life, they would not have rejected the Divine Messengers.

2587. Important Words :

عَبَثًا (for no purpose) is infinitive noun from عَبَثَ ('*abitha*) which means, he indulged in amusement: he joked and jested. عَبَثَ means, to do a thing which has no known good or benefit and has no object or purpose. They say فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ عَبَثًا i.e. he did a thing which had no purpose or object in it (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

After bringing home to disbelievers the in-

iquity of their behaviour and of their persecution of Divine Messengers and joking and jesting with their followers, God reprimands them by reminding them that the manner in which they lead their lives shows that they think that man's life has no object or purpose and that this great universe of which he is at once the axis and centre and the aim and object, has been created without purpose. The reprimand implies the answer that man has been created to serve a great purpose, a noble object. It is to become God's Vicegerent on earth and to develop and reflect in his person Divine attributes, particularly the four attributes mentioned in the next verse. He has been endowed with a Divine personality and is manifestly the central point of creation or at least that part of creation which is related to our universe and it is to help him to reach the great goal which he is destined to attain that God sends His Messengers. The verse further signifies that man's life having a great purpose to fulfil will not end with his departure from this world and with the soul's flight from its physical habitat. The human soul will continue its never-ending journey in a new world, a new form and in a new body. The very idea that with the dissolution of its physical tabernacle the human soul suffers death militates against God's wisdom and against His whole design and purpose in creating universe.

117. "Exalted then be Allah, the True King. There is no God but He, the Lord of the Glorious Throne."²⁵⁸⁸

فَتَعَلَّى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ
الْكَرِيمِ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. And he who calls on another god along with Allah, for which he has no proof, shall have to render an account to his Lord. Certainly, the disbelievers will not prosper.²⁵⁸⁹

وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ
فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119. And say, 'My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and Thou art the Best of those who show mercy.'

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

"20 : 115 ; 22 : 63; 24 : 26.

2588. Commentary :

This verse expressly supplies the answer to the vital question as to what is the aim and object of man's creation. It is this that man should develop in himself and demonstrate in his behaviour Divine attributes, particularly the four basic ones mentioned in the present verse, viz., the King (الملك), the True Lord (الحق), the One God, beside Whom there is no other god (لا اله الا هو) and the Lord of the Glorious Throne (رب العرش الكريم). These four attributes demanded for their manifestation the creation of man and the universe. They correspond to, and, in fact, are the four attributes mentioned in an inverse order in the opening Chapter of the Qur'ān, viz., رب العالمين (the Lord of all the worlds), الرحمان (the Gracious), الرحيم (the Merciful) and مالک يوم الدين (Master of the Day of Judgment); the attribute 'Lord of the Glorious Throne' (رب العرش الكريم), corresponding to the

attribute 'Lord of the Worlds' (رب العالمين) and the attribute 'There is no god but He' (لا اله الا هو) to the attribute 'the Gracious' (الرحمان). Similarly, the attribute 'the True' (الحق) corresponds to the attribute 'the Merciful' (الرحيم) and the attribute the King (الملك) corresponds to the attribute 'Master of the Day of Judgment' (مالک يوم الدين). Thus there exists a very striking resemblance and a deep connection between these two sets of Divine attributes.

2589. Commentary :

The verse means to say that after the fact has been established that man has been created to fulfil a great object and that object is to develop and manifest in him Divine attributes, if he were so foolish as to worship gods of his own conception or creation he will have to render an account of his actions to God in the life to come and in the present life also such people will meet with frustration and discomfiture.

CHAPTER 24

AL-NŪR

(Revealed after Hijra)

Context

The consensus of scholarly opinion assigns this Chapter to the Medinite period. It comprises 65 verses including *Bismillah*. Its connection with its predecessor, *Sūra Al-Mu'minūn*, consists in the fact that towards the end of that *Sūra* it was stated that Islam would continue to produce men who would, by their righteousness and godly conduct, draw upon themselves God's pleasure and would become the recipients of Divine succour. The present *Sūra* deals with the means and methods which help to draw Divine grace and succour and it is laid down as a principle that, besides Divine worship and adopting the ways of virtue and righteousness, the protection and preservation of national morals and the maintenance of discipline of a high order in the family and the community are very essential for this purpose. This is why the *Sūra* at the very outset lays great stress on the preservation of national morals with an added emphasis on the regulation and reformation of relations between the sexes. The *Sūra* seems to imply a veiled rebuke to the opponents of Islam, particularly the Christians, that inasmuch as their religious life and social morals have deteriorated, they have become deprived of Divine help but that this will not be the case with the followers of the Holy Prophet. Their religious and moral condition will improve and as a result of it God's grace will descend on them.

In fact, the preceding *Sūra* contains in embryonic form the subject-matter of the present *Sūra*. The latter forms a link in the chain of *Sūrās* which constitute a denunciation of, and are opposed to, the Christian Faith. The preceding *Sūra* said that one of the essential characteristics of believers who were destined to meet with Divine succour and success was that they guarded their chastity. The *Sūra* under comment is an extension and amplification of the subject-matter of its predecessor. Thus by implication the *Sūra* leads to the inference that the popular notion that success can be achieved and maintained merely by subscribing to the doctrines and tenets of a true religion possesses no foundation in fact; on the contrary, the achievement and maintenance of success demands that the intellect, ideals and morals of a people should also become chaste and there should exist harmony and appreciative understanding between the relations of an individual and those of the community, and great emphasis ought to be laid on national discipline and organization, and precedence should be accorded to national requirements over the needs of individuals.

Date of Revelation

The *Sūra*, as stated above, is of Medinite origin. The incident relating to 'Āisha to which special reference has been made in this *Sūra* took place in 5 A.H. after the Holy Prophet's return

from the expedition against Banī Muṣṭaliq, which took place in the month of Sha'bān of that year.

So it can be safely stated that the *Sūra* was revealed towards the end of the fifth year of the Hijra.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* deals with certain special subjects and has laid particular stress on the problems which constitute the foundation on which the whole social and moral structure stands and which cannot be defied without doing mortal injury to the moral well-being of a people. As sexual immorality is calculated to break the discipline and organization of a community and as the evil associated with it is likely to affect severely its morals, great emphasis has been laid in the *Sūra* on the avoidance of suspicion in matters of sex. First of all the *Sūra* deals with the subject of suspicion that a husband may come to entertain about the moral conduct of his wife which more often than not casts a severe strain on the whole family relations. It proceeds to lay down special regulations and injunctions to be observed in dealing with a situation that might arise between the spouses. Then we are warned not to become panicky on account of a few individuals straying away from the path of moral rectitude as individual cases of moral lapse may cause the whole community to become alert and careful; and thus may prove conducive to good results. The subject is further developed and slander-mongering receives a severe reprimand, irresponsible talk about sexual immorality is strongly discouraged, and only such statements as fall within the purview of legal evidence are allowed to be made about the moral conduct of a person. Because, if, on the basis of mere suspicion or the testimony of witnesses of doubtful integrity, haphazard aspersions are permitted to be cast on one another's chastity, sexual immorality is likely to become widespread in the community and young people are prone to run away with the notion that there is no harm in indulging freely in sex.

The believers are then strongly enjoined to guard and preserve good morals and manners because all those actions that weaken the morals of a people are evil in their very nature and origin, and it is very essential for Muslims to develop watchfulness and extreme awareness about the protection and preservation of national morals. If this vigilance is allowed to relax, deterioration in national morals is sure to ensue. But whereas it is true that sexual immorality, if permitted to spread unchecked, brings about the degradation and disintegration of a whole community, individuals suspected of stray acts of immorality should not be hunted down and crushed. As in every community there are to be found some persons of lax morals, such individuals may be treated with a certain indulgence. But at the same time a warning is held out to those who seek, by their continued pernicious activities, to create discord among Muslims and indulge in abusive language and calumny that they will be punished in this world and in the next. God will expose their iniquities and sins and thus will bring upon them disgrace and humiliation. Muslims are enjoined not to give ready credence to unseemly things said about a person who to all outward appearance leads a good life, just as they would not readily attribute good things to a bad man.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to observe that it is his careless acts that subject a man to suspicion and calumny and that most careless of all such acts is promiscuous intermingling between the sexes. In order to put a stop to such occasions as cause suspicion and lead to slander-mongering the *Sūra* directs a Muslim not to enter a house without having obtained prior permission of its inmates and having greeted them with the salutation, "peace be upon you," and if such permission is not forthcoming he is expected to go back and not to insist on seeing the person whom he wishes to see. But a person is allowed to enter an unoccupied house in which his property is lying without asking the permission of anybody. Further, the *Sūra* enjoins on Muslim men and women that if they happen to confront each other, they should restrain their looks and guard all avenues of sin and vice. This commandment applies equally to men and women. As an additional safeguard, Muslim women are further enjoined not to display their beauty, natural as well as artificial, to those males as are outside the prohibited degrees of marriage, except such parts of the body as it is not possible to cover, for instance, the build of the body or the stature. For this purpose they should wear their head-coverings in such a manner as to make them hang down over their breasts. (For a detailed note on "purdah" see v. 32.)

Another safeguard is enjoined for the improvement and preservation of national morals, viz., that widows should not be allowed to remain unmarried. They should be married at the earliest possible occasion and no consideration of poverty or insufficiency of means should be permitted to stand in the way of their marriage. And it is laid down that those who are devoid of necessary means to get married, should all the more be on their guard to preserve their chastity. Another measure laid down for the purpose of safeguarding sexual morality is that steps should be taken to set free prisoners of war at the earliest occasion and a captive who does not find it possible to earn his or her freedom immediately may be allowed to pay the indemnity money in instalments. For this purpose a contract may be made between the captive and the Islamic Government, and other Muslims are urged to help him or her to earn freedom, if possible, by paying the indemnity themselves. An additional injunction with regard to female captives of war is to the effect that such obligations should not be imposed upon them as should compel them to lead a life of vice and sin, and Muslims are warned that if they imposed such obligations on them, the responsibility for the ensuing evil consequences will be theirs and not of the female prisoners of war. These are commandments, the *Sūra* says, which if scrupulously observed are calculated to raise the standard of morality among Muslims.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to touch upon another very important subject, viz., that the light of heavens and earth emanates from God alone. It goes on to expatiate on the significance and beauty of this subject and adds that this light is decreed to manifest itself through Muslims who are marked out for greatness and honour. It is further stated that because an obscure Law or human intellect alone forms the basis of Christian moral teaching, therefore all their efforts to reform their morals will prove futile and they will find the work of moral regeneration very difficult as no reformation is possible without a Divine Law.

"Why cannot man see this patent fact," the *Sūra* purports to say, "that Divine Law is full of blessing and mercy and that definitely it is not a curse. But if man, unaided by Divine guidance,

cannot find the right way for himself, does it mean that God, too, cannot show him the right way? One thing, however, is quite clear that mere profession of faith can produce no good results. It is essential that Divine commandments should be observed and acted upon regardless of consideration of material benefits.”

The *Sūra* then holds out a promise to Muslims that if they carried out the programme of life which God has laid down for them, they will become the leaders of the world both in spiritual and temporal matters, and that their religion will become firmly established in the world. But they are told that when their rule and dominion is established and their cause triumphs and prevails, they should worship God, help the poor and the needy and obey the commandments of their Prophet and never allow the idea to enter their heads that their opponents can prevail against them even though the means and material at their disposal are great and their numbers large. This can and will never happen.

Towards the close of the *Sūra* Muslims are again urged to set right their family and national affairs and to be on their guard against promiscuous intermingling of the sexes. A special direction to be observed in this respect is that even prisoners of war serving as house servants and also minor children should not enter the private apartments of their masters or parents before dawn, at noon, and after nightfall. At other times all members of the household are at liberty to move about the house freely. When, however, children reach their maturity they should also observe the regulations in regard to “purdah.” The strict observance of these Quranic rules and regulations is essential for the moral well-being of the Muslim society. Regulations about “purdah” apply only to young women of marriageable age. Old women who have no desire for marriage can, if they so choose, relax them, but even they are not allowed to display their adornments to strangers. But the observance of these rules should not be allowed to stand in the way of relatives visiting each other and dining together but those who are not closely related are not to go to other people’s houses without being invited. Next to family organization, and even more important than this, is the social organization of a people and the *Sūra* has not neglected to lay down requisite rules for the smooth and successful conduct of national affairs. One important regulation to be strictly observed in this connection is that when Muslims meet in an assembly to transact a business of national importance no one should leave it without the permission of the Imām or the Leader.

The *Sūra* ends on a note of encouragement to Muslims that God being the Master of all that is in the heavens and the earth and having full knowledge of man’s moral needs and requirements has laid down rules and regulations which, if carried into effect, are calculated certainly to win for them the support of other men and of the laws of nature.

سُورَةُ النُّورِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ ﴿١٢١﴾

1. ^a In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.²⁵⁹⁰

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. *This is a Sūra which We have revealed and which We have made obligatory; and We have revealed therein clear Signs, that you may take heed.*²⁵⁹¹

سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ②

^aSee 1 : 1

2590. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

2591. **Important Words :**

سورة (Chapter) is infinitive noun from سار. They say سار الحائط *i.e.* he scaled the wall. سار إليه means, he jumped upon him and attacked him. سورة means, trace, mark, sign; rank, dignity, degree, excellence; a very high and beautiful building; a thing complete and perfect; part or portion of a thing; a Chapter of the Qur'ān. They say له عندك سورة *i.e.* he has a rank or dignity with you, *i.e.* you respect him. له سورة في المجد means, he possesses a degree or rank in dignity. نأتوا بسورة من مثله means, so bring a Chapter like it (Lane, Aqrab & Qurṭubī).

فرضناها (We have made it obligatory). فرضه means, he made a notch or an incision in it, namely, a piece of wood. فرض means, (1) He (God) made a thing or prayer or statutes or ordinances obligatory or binding upon men, (2) he (the Prophet) instituted or prescribed a thing as an ordinance or statute; (3) he (a judge) decreed or adjudged; he assigned or appointed a particular time for doing a thing or he determined or defined or limited it. They say فرض الله الأحكام على عباده *i.e.* God has made the commandments obligatory on His

servants. فرضناها means, in which We have set down the obligatory statutes (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

All the different Chapters of the Qur'ān are called *Sūrās*. But the present Chapter has been specifically called a *Sūra* because it draws pointed attention to the importance of its contents. The implication of the use of the word *Sūra*—also meaning rank or dignity—is that Muslims by acting upon the commandments and ordinances embodied in this *Sūra* would make great social progress and attain national eminence, glory and dignity. The emphasis on the words, “which We have revealed and which We have made obligatory,” also points to the great importance of the commandments of this *Sūra* inasmuch as all other Quranic *Sūrās* also have been revealed by God and their commandments have also been made obligatory and the present *Sūra* possesses no peculiarity in this respect. The implication also seems to be that whereas the commandments contained in this *Sūra* are specially intended to raise the moral standard of the Muslim community and to make them a great nation, they would be neglected and ignored

3. The adulteress and the adulterer (or the fornicatress and the fornicator)—flog each one of them with a hundred stripes. And let not pity for the twain take hold of you in *executing* the judgment of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment. ²⁵⁹²

الرَّانِيَةُ وَالرَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ
جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا
طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

by them ; and regrettably it has so happened. In slavish imitation of the customs and manners of other nations the Muslims have infringed and violated the commandments of this *Sūra* more than the ordinances embodied in other Chapters of the Qur'ān.

The words, “that you may remember,” signify that Muslims should not ignore the important lesson that the *Sūra* has been revealed for their social and moral uplift, leading ultimately to their spiritual advancement. They should remember that just as defiance of commandments about sexual relations does serious injury to physical and social development of a people, similarly wrong spiritual connections lead to moral and spiritual deterioration.

2592. Important Words :

الزَّانِي is act. part. from زنى (aor. يزنى inf. n. زنى & زنا). They say زنى بها i.e. he committed fornication or adultery with her. Thus الزنا means both fornication and adultery. ولد الزنا and ابن زنى, ولد زنية all mean the same thing, i.e. the offspring of fornication or adultery. الزانى means, fornicator or adulterer, and الزانية means, fornicatress or adulteress; and applied to a man it has an intensive meaning, i.e. one much addicted to fornication or adultery. The plural of زان is زناة like قضاة which is plural of قاضى and the plural of زانية is زوان (Lane & Aqrab).

جلدة (stripes) is derived from جلد. They say جلد i.e., he hit or hurt his skin; he beat his skin; he beat him; he struck him with a whip; he flogged him with a whip. جلدة means, flogging, scourging, whipping; stripe. The word is used both as plural and singular (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Chastity as a moral virtue holds a very high place in the code of Islamic laws that govern relations between the sexes. The present *Sūra* has laid down comprehensive commandments to safeguard and protect it. Islam views with extreme disapprobation the slightest breach of these laws. It is Islam's very great sensitiveness about chastity that is reflected in the punishment prescribed for adultery or fornication in the verse under comment. The punishment prescribed is hundred stripes, no distinction having been made whether the guilty persons are married or unmarried or one of the party is married and the other unmarried. Thus flogging and not stoning to death according to this verse is the punishment prescribed by Islam for adultery or fornication. Nowhere in the Qur'ān stoning to death has been laid down as punishment for adultery and for that matter for any other crime however serious. Islam has not prescribed killing as a necessary and unqualified punishment even for crimes much more heinous than adultery such as unprovoked murder,

dacoity, treason against the State and disturbing the peace of the land. Though extreme penalty for these crimes is death, yet the payment of blood money in the case of the first offence (2:129) and imprisonment or banishment for the other crimes (5 : 33-34). have been laid down as alternative punishments. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān where punishment for adultery for a married slave-girl is mentioned (4:26), it is clearly stated that she will get half the punishment prescribed for that of a free, married woman; and evidently the punishment of stoning to death cannot be halved.

So in spite of the fact that the Qur'ān has quite clearly and unequivocally laid down (as in the verse under comment) flogging as the punishment for adultery and has made no discrimination whatever between a married or an unmarried culprit in the matter of awarding punishment (because زانی means both a fornicator and adulterer), and in spite of the fact that the present and other relevant verses were revealed in connection with slander-mongering about 'Āisha, the Holy Prophet's noble consort, who herself was a married lady, it is curious that the misconception has persisted without any justification or linguistic authority among certain schools of Muslim religious thought that the verse under comment deals with punishment for unmarried persons only and that the punishment for a married adulterer and adulteress is stoning to death. The misconception seems to be due to a few cases recorded in the Ḥadīth when married persons guilty of adultery were stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet. One of these few cases was that of a Jew and a Jewess who were stoned to death in accordance with the Mosaic Law (Bukhārī). It was invariably the Holy Prophet's practice that he abided by the Law of the Torah in deciding

cases till a new commandment was revealed to him. In one or two other cases on record in which the punishment accorded was stoning to death, it has not been established whether the crime was committed before or after the verse under comment was revealed. It seems that in cases in which the guilty person was stoned to death, the crime was committed before the revelation of this verse but by some miscalculation on the part of some chronicler it was believed to have taken place after it. There is no dearth of such historical anachronisms in the books of Ḥadīth. Or there might have been some other aggravating circumstances besides the crime of adultery which made the Holy Prophet award the guilty person or persons the extreme punishment of death and which the chronicler of the incident failed to take into account. Otherwise it is simply inconceivable that the Holy Prophet should have contravened the quite clear and unequivocal Divine commandment in this respect.

Another possible cause for misunderstanding about the form of punishment for adultery may be a saying attributed to Caliph 'Umar. He is reported to have said: "There was a verse in the Book of God about *rajm* (stoning). We read it, we understood it and we remembered it. The Holy Prophet stoned adulterers to death and we also stoned after him. Were it not that people might say that 'Umar had added in the Book of God what was not in it, I would have written it down" (Kashf al-Ghumma vol. 2, p. 111). The whole ḥadīth seems to be a pure fabrication or at best the result of misunderstanding or distortion of what 'Umar might actually have said. How by writing down in the Qur'ān what was a part of it could be called an addition to it and how, of all men, 'Umar could have been afraid of anybody for doing the

4. The adulterer (or fornicator) cannot have sexual intercourse but with an adulteress (or fornicatress) or an idolatrous woman, and an adulteress (or fornicatress)—none can have sexual intercourse with her but an adulterer (or fornicator) or an idolatrous man. That indeed is forbidden to the believers.²⁵⁹³

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ
لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ عَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٥٩٣﴾

right thing, least of all for restoring to the Qur'ān a lost text. It is impossible to attribute such confused thinking and irresponsible talk to a man of 'Umar's intellectual and moral calibre and stature. If the saying were to be taken at its face value, the whole claim of the Qur'ān that it enjoys perpetual Divine protection and therefore is quite free from human interference falls to the ground.

'Alī seems to hold quite a different view from that of 'Umar regarding this very important religious question. After flogging a woman who had committed adultery and then stoning her to death, he is reported to have said: "I have flogged her in obedience to the commandment of the Book of God and have stoned her to death in accordance with the practice of the Holy Prophet" (Bukhārī). From this ḥadīth two inferences clearly emerge:

(1) In the matter of punishing an adulterer or adulteress the practice of the Holy Prophet was at variance with the commandment of God as laid down in the Qur'ān, which is impossible. (2) Whereas according to 'Umar there was a commandment in the Book of God about stoning to death of an adulterer, according to 'Alī there was no such commandment, it was only the practice of the Holy Prophet according to which he stoned to death persons guilty of adultery. It is impossible to reconcile the views of these two great leaders of Islam

and equally impossible to believe that they held diametrically opposed views regarding a most important question of religion. And it is indeed very surprising that in the face of quite clear, unambiguous and unequivocal Divine commandments the view should have been held, of all men by 'Umar and 'Alī, or by any school of Muslim religious thought that Islam has prescribed stoning to death as punishment for an adulterer. The Qur'ān rejects this view as wholly untenable. Somewhere some misunderstanding must have occurred on the part of a chronicler or narrator of the sayings of the Holy Prophet which has caused all this confusion.

It may be of interest to note that the verse has used the words الزانى والزانية (and not زانى وزانية) which suggest a particular class of adulterers and fornicators such as hardened or habitual culprits or those who are lost to all sense of shame and remorse and having thrown all restraint and constraint to the winds indulge in this hideous crime openly.

The verse further lays down that the beating of the culprit should not be so severe as to cause his death or break his bone but should hurt only the skin as the word اجلدوا used in the verse signifies and as is implied in 4:26.

2593. Important Words :

لا يَنْكِحُ (cannot have sexual intercourse. نكح المرأة means, he married the woman; he

had sexual relations with her. نكحت المرأة means, the woman married so she had a husband. نكاح signifies the (i) marriage without coitus; (ii) coitus with marriage; (iii) coitus without marriage. نكح المطر الارض means, the rain mixed with the sub-soil of the earth. نكح النعاس عينه means, slumber overcame his eyes. (Lane & Aqrab).

The words الزانى لا ينكح الا زانية may have all or one of the following interpretations: (i) a man given to adultery shall not marry but a woman given to the same evil practice. That is to say a wicked man who is not ashamed of freely indulging in adultery and has not repented of his evil ways, can never prevail upon a chaste believing woman to marry him. Only a wicked woman of low moral character like him or an idolatress whose standard of morality like him is very low can be persuaded to marry him.

(ii) An adulterer can have sexual relations only with a woman given to adultery. It is impossible for a chaste believing woman to stoop so low as to yield to the wicked advances of an adulterer. Such a wicked man can only get an adulteress to pander to his carnal passions. An adulteress and idolatress have been bracketed together because of the very low standard of sexual morality obtaining among idol-worshippers because they have no revealed Law to guide them.

(iii) The adulterer (or fornicator) cannot have sexual relations but with an adulteress (or fornicatress). This meaning is supported by a saying of the Holy Prophet. He is reported to have said لا يزنى زان و هو مؤمن i.e. A believer does not commit adultery while he remains a Muslim.

The ḥadīth signifies that no true believing man or woman can commit adultery. It is only disbelievers or idolaters who light heartedly can commit such heinous crimes.

The words حرم ذلك على المؤمنين may signify that (i) marriage between a true believer and an adulteress or idolatrous woman and vice versa is forbidden; (ii) the committing of adultery is forbidden to the believers, the pronoun ذلك (that) in this case standing for adultery.

Islam regards adultery as one of the most heinous of all social crimes and looks upon sexual chastity of a man or woman as one of his or her most precious possessions. As the present *Sūra* deals with the subject of establishment of the dominion and kingdom of Islam, it fittingly opens with condemnation of the most deadly of all social crimes which if not checked and suppressed in due time is calculated to bring about total disintegration and destruction of the Muslim community. The Qur'ān seeks to close all those avenues through which this disease finds its way among a people and severely punishes the act of adultery and condemns the guilty parties as social pariahs. While the preceding verse has laid down the punishment which the Qur'ān metes out to adulterers, the verse under comment stigmatizes adulterers and adulteresses as social lepers with whom all social relationship should be avoided. The verse, however, should not be understood to mean that the Qur'an bars, for all time, to such persons the entrance to respectable Muslim society. It does leave the door of repentance always open. The verse speaks only of persons who are lost to all sense of shame and who habitually indulge in this fell vice and show no sign of repenting of their evil wayss.

5. And °those who calumniate chaste women but bring not four witnesses—flog them with eighty stripes, and never admit their evidence *thereafter*, and it is they that are the transgressors, ²⁵⁹⁴

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ
شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا
لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝

a24 : 24

2594. Commentary :

The other social evil, second to adultery in heinousness which eats into the vitals of human society, is the slandering of innocent persons. Islam views also with extreme disfavour this social evil which has become so common in the so-called civilized modern society, and severely punishes the accusers of innocent people. The verse under comment mentions three forms of punishment in an ascending order which are to be meted out to a slanderer; first, the physical punishment of scourging; secondly, the disgrace of being branded as a perjurer and a liar which invalidates his evidence and thirdly, the spiritual stigma of being adjudged as a wicked transgressor.

It may be noted that the punishment prescribed for the slanderer who accuses a chaste woman without producing adequate evidence seems to be even more serious than the punishment prescribed for the crime of adultery itself. In the latter case the punishment prescribed is one hundred lashes, only twenty lashes more than those prescribed for slandering. But after undergoing the punishment the adulterer or adultress has not to carry the disgrace of being branded as a perjurer, nor does he or she lie under the more serious spiritual stigma of being adjudged by God as a wicked transgressor.

The commandment about scandal-mongering is of particular importance in the present state of the so-called civilized society where it has assumed the form of a common social pastime. No wonder that as a result of scandal-mongering sexual immorality has greatly increased, particularly in Western countries.

It may also be noted that in this verse no mention has been made of the accusation being true or false. So long as the accuser cannot produce the necessary evidence in support of his charge, the charge would be considered as false and the accuser would render himself liable to the prescribed punishment. Whatever the real facts of the case, the woman with whom adultery is alleged to have been committed will be held innocent so long as the required evidence is not produced. The law is, in fact, intended to suppress with a strong hand the offence of slandering and scandal-mongering which is calculated to encourage the spread of those very crimes which the scandal-mongers hold up to public gaze.

It follows from this verse that a person charged with adultery is held guilty only if four witnesses, in addition to the accuser, are forthcoming who solemnly declare and testify to the fact of having seen with their own eyes the accused person actually committing the crime.

6. Except "those who repent thereafter and make amends, for truly Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful."²⁵⁹⁵

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾

44 : 18

In case the offender himself confesses to the crime, no witnesses will, of course, be required to prove his guilt provided he is in full possession of his senses. From the Hadith it appears that in such an event the offender must himself testify four times to having committed the crime. In case a man alleges that he has committed adultery the woman implicated will not be held guilty unless she herself admits that she too has committed the crime. This provision is intended to save the good name of innocent men or women from being besmirched by persons of no character who are not ashamed of confessing to having committed adultery in order to implicate other innocent persons along with themselves.

Similarly, when a person makes an allegation against another, it is the accuser who is required to produce four witnesses to the crime alleged. The accused person has not to prove his innocence. It is only after four witnesses have been produced that he is asked to produce his defence. If the accuser fails to produce the requisite four witnesses, then both he and the witnesses will be liable to punishment on the plea of having made an allegation for which they had not produced the necessary evidence.

The object of such stringent provisions is to discourage the spread of indecent scandals. Such provisions amply refute the criticism made against the Islamic Law that the penalty it prescribes for adultery is barbarous. The evidence and the attendant conditions required

to prove the commission of adultery are, in fact, almost impossible to produce save in cases where the offence is committed openly and in such cases a severe punishment, in order to be deterrent, is certainly very essential.

If a person confesses to having committed the crime and repeats his confession four times, he will not be punished if he recants at the time of infliction of the punishment. In such an event, however, the culprit will be liable to punishment for slandering the alleged accessory.

The commandment contained in this verse covers both men and women although the word used is *المحصنات* which means 'chaste women.' In the Arabic language when something has to be said which relates equally to both men and women the gender used is masculine. But when something is said regarding a matter which concerns women more than men, then feminine gender is used. The commandment here relates to punishment for slandering whether the victim of the slander is man or woman but as women generally are more often the victims of such slanders, the verse speaks of 'chaste women.' Similarly the word *الذين* (those) though in masculine gender applies to both men and women slanderers.

2595. Commentary :

Opinions differ as to which of the three punishments prescribed for slandering is to be remitted after a slanderer repents and makes amends. The question of the first punishment

7. And as for those who calumniate their wives, and have no witnesses except themselves—the evidence of any one of such people *shall suffice* if he bears witness four times in the name of Allah *saying* that he is surely of those who speak the truth.²⁵⁹⁶

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ
إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَدَاتٍ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ④

8. And *his fifth oath shall be to say* that Allah's curse be upon him if he be of the liars.²⁵⁹⁷

وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ ⑤

9. But it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times in the name of Allah *saying* that he is of the liars.²⁵⁹⁸

وَيَذَرُوهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَدَاتٍ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ⑥

10. And *her fifth oath shall be to say* that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.

وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ غَضَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ⑦

does not arise because the corporal punishment is administered as soon as the offence of the guilty person is proved. The last two punishments can only be remitted after a real and true repentance is proved.

2596. Commentary :

As suspicion between husband and wife is likely to cast a severe strain on the whole family relations, a special regulation has been laid down in the verse under comment to meet such an unhappy situation if it ever happens to arise. If a husband accuses his wife of adultery he has to declare on oath four times that his allegation is true.

2597. Commentary :

Before the accuser invokes the curse of God upon himself, the serious consequences of a false oath should be fully explained to him.

2598. Commentary :

After the accused woman has established her innocence by taking four oaths that her husband had falsely accused her and the fifth oath invoking God's curse upon herself if her husband's accusation was true no punishment is awarded to her and the husband is also not held punishable for accusing her. But after such a serious breach the couple will cease to live as husband and wife, because no chance is then left of the restoration of amicable relations between them

11. And were it not for Allah's grace and His mercy upon you, and *the fact* that Allah is Compassionate and Wise, you would have come to grief.²⁵⁹⁹

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

2 12. Verily, those who brought forth the lie are a party from among you. Think it not to be an evil for you; nay, it is good for you. Every one of them shall have *his share* of what he has earned of the sin; and he among them who took the chief part therein shall have a grievous punishment.²⁶⁰⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالِافْكِ عَصَبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ
شَرًّا لَّكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا اكْتَسَبَ
مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ ۝

2599. Commentary :

The verse means to say that God is merciful to mankind inasmuch as He has laid down in the Qur'ān injunctions by acting upon which they can save themselves from those most dreadful social evils which are likely to undermine the whole social structure. The verse also implies a warning to Muslims to beware of these evils. It is, however, to be regretted that the Quranic injunctions in regard to these social evils have been honoured more in the breach than in the observance thereof.

2600. Important Words :

افك (a lie) is infinitive noun from افك (afaka). They say افكته i.e. (i) he changed his or its condition or manner of being; (ii) he turned him or it away or back from a thing; (iii) he turned him away or back by lying; (iv) he changed or perverted his judgment; (v) he deceived or beguiled him; (vi) he lied or said what was untrue. افك الناس means, he told the people a big lie. ifkun means, a lie; a great lie; a falsehood (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 76.

Commentary :

The extremely painful incident referred to in

this verse took place when on the Holy Prophet's return from the expedition against Bani Muṣṭaliq in 5 A.H., the Muslim army had to halt for the night at a place, a short distance from Medina. In this expedition the Holy Prophet was accompanied by his noble and talented wife, 'Āisha. As it happened 'Āisha went out some distance from the camp to attend to the call of nature. When she returned, she discovered that she had dropped her necklace somewhere. The necklace itself was of no great value, but as it was a loan from a friend 'Āisha went out again to search for it. On her return, to her great grief and mortification she found that the army had already marched away with the camel she was riding, her attendants supposing that she was in the litter as she was then very young and light of weight. In her helplessness she sat down and cried till sleep overpowered her. Ṣafwān, a Muhajir, who was coming in the rear recognized her as he had seen her before the verse enjoining "purdah" was revealed and brought her on his camel to Medina, himself walking behind the animal (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Nikāh*). The Hypocrites of Medina, led by

13. Why did not the believing men and believing women, when you heard of it, think well of their own people, and say, 'This is a manifest lie?'

14. Why did they not bring four witnesses to *prove* it? Since they have not brought the *required* witnesses, they are indeed liars in the sight of Allah!²⁶⁰¹

15. "Were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you, in this world and the Hereafter, a great punishment would have befallen you for the *slander* into which you plunged.

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾

لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا
بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ
الْآخِرَةِ لَسَسْتُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

42 : 65 ; 4 : 84.

'Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salūl, were always on the look-out to create some mischief and cause distress to the Holy Prophet. They made capital out of this incident and spread a malicious scandal against 'Āisha and unfortunately some of the Muslims also became associated with it. 'Āisha's innocence was at last established in the present and the following few verses of the Qur'ān. Those who had taken part in fabricating and spreading the accusation were punished and injunctions were revealed effectively to deal with scandal-mongers and their evil designs and activities.

The words "who took the chief part," are understood to refer to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the Hypocrites of Medina, who had invented the lie and gave it wide publicity. He died an ignominious death, frustrated in all his designs against Islam and in his ambition and aspiration to become the crowned king of Medina.

The words, "think it not to be an evil for you, nay it is good for you," signify that the incident

contained a great lesson for the Muslims. They were warned to be on their guard against falling a victim to the machinations of scandal-mongers and against accusing Muslim men and women of crimes of which they were quite innocent.

2601. Commentary :

As stated above, not only does Islam take a very serious view of the crimes against chastity and punishes them severely, it is also very sensitive about the good reputation of Muslim men and women and takes very effective steps to safeguard it. Islam regards it as highly reprehensible and even criminal to spread false accusations against them. According to this verse, he who accuses a Muslim man or woman of adultery and does not produce four witnesses to prove his allegation shall be held to be a liar and treated as such by the Islamic Law even if he can produce one, two or even three persons as eye-witnesses to the act. The fact of one person seeing another person committing this immoral act does not entitle him to go about spreading the evil report.

16. When you received it *and then talked about it* with your tongues, and you uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought it to be a light matter, while in the sight of Allah it was *a grievous thing*.²⁶⁰²

17. And wherefore did you not say, when you heard of it, 'It is not proper for us to talk about it. Holy art Thou, O God, this is a grievous calumny!'

18. Allah admonishes you never to return to the like thereof, if you are believers.

19. And Allah explains to you the commandments; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

20. Those who love that immorality should spread among the believers, will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, and you know not.²⁶⁰³

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسِبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا ۚ وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ۝١٦

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا ۖ سُبْحَنَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝١٧

يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝١٨

وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝١٩

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٢٠

2602. Important Words :

For تَلَقَّوْنَهُ (you received it) see 2 : 38.

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the evils mentioned above are moral sins which unhappily are committed light-heartedly but which produce very grievous results. Every sin is a deadly poison which a true believer must avoid. The wages of sin is death. This is the supreme lesson which this verse teaches.

2603. Commentary :

In the foregoing few verses the Qur'ān has severely condemned scandal-mongering. It has taken as serious a view of the spreading and circulation of false accusations as that of crimes

against chastity. It has condemned and prescribed punishment for both the crimes, for scandal-mongering a severer punishment, since it is calculated to produce more grievous consequences as far as the prevalence of sexual immorality in a community is concerned than the stray acts of sexual misconduct on the part of one or two individuals. If scandal-mongering is allowed to be practised unchecked in a community, it loses all sense of horror and abhorrence at the commission of immoral acts. Members of such a community gradually come to treat such acts light-heartedly with the result that immorality becomes rampant and a sense of pessimism with regard to its future begins to prevail

21. And but for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you and *the fact* that Allah is Compassionate and Merciful, *you would have been ruined.*

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ دُؤُوفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

R. 3 22. O ye who believe! *follow not the footsteps of Satan, and whoso follows the footsteps of Satan *should know that* he surely enjoins immorality and manifest evil. And but for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure; but Allah purifies whom He pleases. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.²⁶⁰⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوبَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ
يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوبَ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ
أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

46 : 143 ; 19 : 45 ; 36 : 61.

in the community, thus shaking the whole moral foundation of society. It is this sense of pessimism which the verse under comment seeks to eradicate. Whereas on the one hand the Qur'ān has severely condemned scandal-mongering and has enjoined that sexual misconduct should be reported to the concerned authorities and not freely talked about in public, on the other it has encouraged that good and virtuous acts should be given wide publicity and proper appreciation. These Quranic injunctions conduce to the creation of a very healthy atmosphere and to the eradication and extermination of the evil of sexual immorality.

The words "Allah knows and you know not" signify that God alone knows the sources of evil and it is He Who alone can direct us as to how an evil can be successfully resisted and eradicated. It is not given to man to find out the genesis and source of evil. Moral philoso-

phers and psychologists have discussed and debated as to what is vice, but none of them has been able so far to trace out its real source. It is the revealed word of God that has done so. The Qur'ān has not only dealt with the various forms of evil and laid down directions and injunctions to meet and conquer it but has also shed light on how evil originates and takes birth and how it develops. In this verse we are told that scandal-mongering leads to the prevalence of vice.

2604. Commentary :

This verse sheds some light on how vice spreads and becomes disseminated and diffused. The propagation of vice begins with something which is apparently quite petty and harmless. As there is implanted in human nature an inherent sense of hesitancy and horror at committing what is clearly and manifestly an evil act to begin with, Satan avoids tempting a man to

23. And let not those who possess wealth and plenty among you swear not to give *aught* to the kindred and to the needy and to those who have left their homes in the cause of Allah. Let them forgive and pass over *the offence*. Do you not desire that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁶⁰⁵

وَلَا يَأْتِلْ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا
أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلِيَعْفُوا وَلِيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا يَحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

commit a manifestly immoral act. He leads his victim to his moral ruin gradually and in stages, beginning with what apparently seems to be quite a harmless act. The victim is tempted to talk to others what he hears from someone else about an immoral act done by an individual. Soon after, scandal-mongering leads him to the forging of slanders, and the next step is the commission of the very offence which he had begun by foisting on others. Islam has cut at the very root of all evil by strictly prohibiting and condemning and even punishing scandal-mongering, as it ultimately leads to the moral disintegration of a community.

The words, "Allah is Hearing, Knowing," mean that when a man loses his way and prays to God, He listens to him and answers his prayer; and when one who is in distress responds to the Divine voice and follows it, Divine knowledge comes to his rescue and guides and leads him to his deliverance.

2605. Important Words :

For لَا يَأْتِلْ (let not swear) see 2 : 227.

Commentary :

The reference in this verse may be to Abū Bakr, the Holy Prophet's most devoted and faithful disciple and his first Successor. Miṣṭah, one of his relatives unfortunately had become involved in the calumny against 'Āisha. On 'Āisha's innocence being established by Divine revelation and her honour completely vindicated, Abū Bakr naturally was disinclined to continue the maintenance-allowance he used to give to Miṣṭah. The verse under comment, according to most reliable traditions, was revealed in connection with the stoppage of Miṣṭah's allowance. It, however, has general application and implies that after a guilty person has received the punishment for his offence as prescribed by Law as Miṣṭah had, he should be subjected to no other annoyance or disability. The punishment received by him clears him of the stigma incurred by the commission of the offence.

The words أُولُوا الْفَضْلَ in the verse seem to refer to Abū Bakr's moral and spiritual eminence as well as his material prosperity and abundance of wealth.

24. "Verily, those who accuse chaste, unwary, believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter. And for them is a grievous chastisement,²⁶⁰⁶

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. ^bOn the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.²⁶⁰⁷

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

a24 : 5. b17 : 37 ; 36 : 66 ; 41 : 21-23.

2606. Important Words :

غافلات (careless) is the plural of غافلة which is active participle in feminine gender from غفل. They say غفل عنه i.e. he was or became unmindful, forgetful, neglectful or heedless of it or inadvertent to it. An Arab would say من اتبع الصيد غفل i.e. he who pursues the object of the chase becomes busy and possessed by it so that he becomes unmindful or unaware of other things. غفل الشيء means, he hid the thing. غفله means, forgetfulness; heedlessness; inadvertence; lack of consciousness (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The subject of scandal-mongering and slander is closed with a severe warning to the slanderers that in addition to the corporal punishment they will incur and the moral obloquy that will remain attached to them, they will carry the curse of God on their heads in this world and in the life to come unless they completely cleanse and reform themselves by real, true and sincere repentance. This shows how serious a view Islam takes of the moral offence of slander and scandal-mongering.

Taking into consideration the various meanings of the root word غفل, the word غافلات would signify those righteous women who have no idea or consciousness of having done any wrong. The use of this word in connection with the calumny about 'Āisha establishes her complete innocence, implying that that paragon of virtue and righteousness had no idea or consciousness of having done any wrong.

2607. Commentary :

Recent scientific researches have established the truth of this verse. Scientific instruments have been invented which if placed in a room, can preserve the talk of a person and even the sound of the movements of his hands, feet or other organs of his body. The instruments greatly help the police in apprehending thieves and other culprits and in bringing them to book. Thus with the help of these instruments the tongue, hands and feet of a guilty person, as it were, bear witness against him. What a great tribute and infallible testimony the invention of these scientific appliances has borne to the Qur'ān being the revealed word of the All-Knowing God. Science has also established the fact that every

26. On that day will Allah pay them their just due, and they will know that "Allah alone is the Manifest Truth."²⁶⁰⁸

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُؤْقِبُهُمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ
اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣١﴾

27. Bad things are for bad men, and bad men are for bad things. And good things are for good men, and good men are for good things; these are innocent of all that they (the calumniators) allege. ^bFor them is forgiveness and an honourable provision.²⁶⁰⁹

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ
وَالْطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ
مُبَرَّرُونَ مَتَى يَقُولُوكُمْ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ
كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a20 : 115 ; 22 : 63 ; 23 : 117. ^b8 : 75 ; 22 : 51.

spoken word and movement or action leaves its impress in the atmosphere. This scientific truth led to the great invention of wireless telegraphy. The Qur'ān, too, has pointed out to this newly discovered scientific truth. According to it these impresses will be given an embodied form in the next life, and thus the limbs of the author of deeds, good or bad, will bear witness against or in favour of him.

2608. Important Words :

دينهم (their due). دين is derived from دان. See 1 : 4.

Commentary :

All truth is relative. A thing may be true from one angle or one point of view but false

from another angle. It is God alone Who is Absolute Truth.

2609. Commentary :

The word الخبيثات meaning evil deeds or obscene words, the verse purports to say that evil persons do evil deeds or indulge in obscene and foul talk and scandal-mongering, while nothing comes out of good and virtuous persons but righteous deeds and pure and ennobling words. The subject of calumny and slander is thus closed with this beautiful epigram and the verse itself ends with giving a certificate of righteousness to 'Āisha to whom the words: "they are innocent of all that which the calumniators allege" primarily refer.

- R. 4 28. O ye who believe! "enter not houses other than your own until you have asked leave and saluted the inmates thereof. That is better for you that you may be heedful.²⁶¹⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ
حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

24 : 62.

2610. Important Words :

أنس به and أنس به is derived from استأنس به and أنس اليه and all mean the same thing, i.e. he was or became friendly or familiar with him. استأنس means, he looked; he considered or examined, endeavouring to obtain a clear knowledge of a thing; he looked about to ascertain if he could see anyone; he enquired; he asked permission (Lane & Aqrab). See also 20 : 11.

Commentary :

Whereas in the preceding few verses light was shed on two of the most serious moral crimes, which destroy domestic peace and social security, in this and the following few verses all those avenues and ways through which these two evils find their way among a people have been discussed, and rules of conduct which effectively put a stop to them have been prescribed. The Qur'ān does not, like the Bible, confine itself to merely laying down a prohibitory commandment couched in such general terms, "do not do this" but gives also the why and wherefore of its commandments and lays down also the remedy and cure of the moral disease about which a certain commandment is given.

The preceding verses had dealt with the evils of adultery and scandal-mongering and had

prescribed suitable punishments to put a stop to these evils. With the verse under comment, however, begin those injunctions and commandments which serve as preventive measures against these evils. The first injunction is that one should not enter a house other than his own without first notifying his arrival by saluting its inmates and seeking their permission and without first eliciting whether they want to see him. This injunction, though apparently very simple and elementary, if made the general rule of conduct is calculated to save much trouble and suspicion. It would not only put a stop to possible scandals but would serve also to save people from being seen in conditions likely to give rise to suspicion and the privacy of the houses will also not be intruded upon. It may also be inferred from this verse that unauthorized entry into an office leads to the dislocation of office work and waste of time, therefore, before entering it, permission should be sought from the concerned authority, and visitors should notify their coming by saluting the inmates. Salutation also helps the inmates to recognize the visitor. The practice of sending in a name-slip or introduction card to a person with whom interview is sought in his office or home is a correct way of finding out whether or not he agrees to seeing the visitor and is in conformity with the above mentioned Quranic injunction.

29. And if you find no one therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it be said to you, 'Go back,' then go back; that is purer for you. And Allah knows well what you do.²⁶¹¹

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدْ فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ
لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. It is no sin on your part to enter uninhabited houses wherein are your goods. And "Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."²⁶¹²

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ
فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do.²⁶¹³

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغْضُوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أَرْوَاحَهُمْ
ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنْ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

a2 : 34 ; 21 : 111 ; 87: 8.

2611. Commentary :

This verse shows that it is prohibited to enter even uninhabited houses without requisite permission having been obtained from the concerned person or persons.

2612. Commentary :

The words "Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal" signify that disregard of the above injunctions will lead to evils which you may know or the evils of which the consequences are beyond your ken and knowledge.

2613. Important Words :

يَغْضُوا (restrain) is derived from غَضَّ. They say غَضَّ طَرَفَهُ او بَصَرَهُ او مِنْ طَرَفِهِ i.e. he restrained or lowered his eye or eyes; he blinked; he contracted his eye or eyes so as to wrinkle the lids; he contracted his eyelids and he looked; he contracted his eye or eyes and

looked towards the ground, not opening his eye or eyes. غَضَّ صَوْتَهُ means, he lowered his voice (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As stated above the Qur'ān is not content with merely taking a superficial view of things but goes to their very root. According to it every good or bad quality springs from a certain root. In the case of a good quality the Qur'ān enjoins that the root should be mastered and fully kept under control and in the case of an evil it aims at its complete eradication and extermination and thus bolts and bars all the avenues to it. As it is the eyes through which most evil thoughts enter the mind, so in the verse under comment believing men and women have been commanded to lower their gaze when they happen to meet one another.

32. And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they disclose not their *natural and artificial* beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty save to their husbands, or to their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands or their sons or the sons of their husbands or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their right hands possess, or such of male attendants as have no sexual appetite, or young children who have no knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And they strike not their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may succeed.²⁶¹⁴

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ
فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا
وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ
بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ
أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَى إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرْبَةِ
مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلُ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَطْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوَاتِ
النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ
مِنَ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

2614. Important Words :

خمرهن (their head-coverings). خمر is the plural of خمار which is derived from خمر which means, he veiled, covered or concealed a thing. خمار means, a woman's muffler or veil with which she covers her head and the lower part of the face leaving exposed only the eyes and part of the nose; a woman's head-covering; a piece of cloth with which a woman covers her head; also a man's turban (Lane & Aqrab).

جيوبهن (their bosoms). جيوب is the plural of جيب which is derived from جاب. They say جابه *i.e.* he made a hole in it; he rent it or tore it; he pierced or bored it; he cut it. جاب القميص

means, he hollowed out the جيب of the shirt he cut the جيب of the shirt or he made a جيب in the shirt. جيب means, the opening at the neck and bosom of a shirt and the like; a pocket; the heart; the bosom (Lane & Aqrab).

أرب (sexual appetite) is derived from أرب (aroba), or أرب (ariba). The former means he was or became cunning, intelligent, sagacious or excellent in judgment and the latter, *i.e.* ariba, means, he wanted it, he was or became in want of it and sought it or desired it. أربه and أرب (irbun) and أرب (arabun) mean the same thing, viz., cunning, intelligence, excellence of judgment, sagacity; want or need. About the Holy Prophet it is said in a ḥadīth لا ربه

i.e. he had the greatest control over his want, desire or sexual desire (Bukhārī). The Quranic words غير اولى الاربه mean, idiots, or persons deficient in intellect or such men as have no need of women; or have no sexual desire (Lane & Mufradāt).

عورات (private parts or nakedness) is the plural of عورة which is derived from عور which means, he was or became blind in one eye. عورة means, the pendulum or pudenda of a man and of a woman; the part or parts of a person which are indecent to expose; parts between the navel and the knee; anything that a man veils or conceals by reason of disdainful pride or of shame or pudency; anything of which one is ashamed when it appears; a woman; any place of concealment; a gap, an opening or a breach in the frontier of hostile country, or in war from which one fears slaughter; cleft or fissure; disgrace or disfigurement; blindness of one eye (Lane & Aqrab).

نسائهن (their women) signifies known or familiar decent women.

Commentary :

As a good deal of misunderstanding and lack of proper knowledge as to what constitutes Islamic "purdah" prevails even among Muslims, a somewhat detailed note on this much-vexed question is called for. Here are the relevant Quranic verses that embody necessary commandments about "purdah":

- (i) O Prophet, tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over them their loose outer garments. It is more likely that they will thus be distinguished and not molested (33 : 60).

The Arabic word used in this verse is جلباب of which the singular is جلباب meaning, an outer or wrapping garment; a head-covering; the gar-

ment with which a woman covers her head and bosom.

- (ii) And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they cast their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty..... (24 : 32 *i.e.* the verse under comment.)
- (iii) O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women if you are righteous. So be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should feel tempted; and speak a decent speech. And stay in your houses with dignity and do not show off yourselves like the showing off of the former days of ignorance (33 : 33-34).
- (iv) O ye who believe, let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not attained to puberty, ask permission of you three times before coming into your presence: before the morning Prayer, and when you take off clothes at noon in summer and after the night Prayer (24 : 59).

The following inferences are clearly deducible from the verses quoted above :

- (i) When they go out, Muslim women are to wear an outer and wrapping garment which should cover their heads and bosoms in such a manner that the garment should come down from the head to the bosom covering the whole body including the face. This is the significance of the Quranic words يدنين عليهن من جلابيبهن (33 : 60). The outer garment is intended to make known the fact that while a Muslim woman goes about her business she may be spared the mental anguish of being stared at by persons of questionable character.
- (ii) Muslim men and women are to restrain their eyes when they happen to face each other.

(iii) The third commandment though apparently applying to the wives of the Prophet, includes, as is the practice of the Qur'ān, other Muslim women also. The words "And stay in your houses" imply that whereas women may go out when necessary, the principal and primary sphere of their activities is inside the house.

(iv) At three stated hours, even children are not allowed to enter the private apartments of their parents nor are domestic servants or female slaves allowed to enter the sleeping room of their masters.

The first commandment applies to women when they go out. Then they are to use an outer garment which should cover their whole body including the face. The second commandment relates to "purdah" primarily inside the four walls of the house when near male relatives frequently come and go. In that case men and women are only to restrain their looks and as an additional precaution women are to take care that their *زينة* i.e. beauty of person, dress and ornaments, is not displayed. They are not required to use *جلباب* (outer garment) because that would be very irksome and even impracticable in view of the free and frequent visits of near blood relations such as cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, etc. The context shows that this commandment relates to "purdah" inside the four walls of the house, because all the persons mentioned in the verse are very near relations who generally visit the houses of their relatives. The special mention in it of four categories of persons besides near relatives, viz., decent women, old servants, female slaves and minor boys, lends additional weight to the inference that the commandment in this verse relates to "purdah" within the four walls of the house.

The fact that the first commandment refers to "purdah" outside the house and the second

commandment basically refers to "purdah" within the four walls of the house is also apparent from the different words that have been used to express the two forms of "purdah" in the relevant verses i.e. 33 : 60, and the verse under comment. Whereas in 33 : 60 the garment which a woman is to use when she goes out is *جلباب*, the garment which she has to use inside the house when relatives visit is *خمار*. Moreover, whereas in 33 : 60 the words used are *يدنين عليهن من جلابيهن* i.e. they should let down over them their outer garments (for a detailed discussion of *جلباب* and *يدنين* see 33 : 60); in the verse under comment the words used are *يخترن بخمرهن على جيوبهن* i.e. they should cast their head-coverings over their bosoms. It is clear that in the former case the garment will cover the head, the face and the bosom while in the latter case only the head and the bosom will become covered and the face may remain uncovered.

It may also be noted in passing that the shape and form of the outer-garment which, as mentioned above, a woman must wear when she goes out and which covers her whole body including the face will vary according to the customs, habits, social status, family traditions and usages of various classes of the Muslim community. The commandment with regard to "purdah" within the four walls of the house will also apply to shops, fields, etc., where women of certain sections of Muslim society have to work to earn their living. There a woman will not be required to veil her face. She will have only to restrain her eyes and to cover her *زينة* i.e. her ornaments and other embellishments, as women within the house have to do when their relatives visit them.

The third commandment requires women to behave with dignity bordering on austerity when talking to stranger men; and they are also required

33. And marry widows from among you, and your male slaves and female slaves who are fit *for marriage*. If they be poor, Allah will grant them means out of His bounty; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.²⁶¹⁵

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَّامِيَّ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَأَمَّا بَكُمْ إِنْ تَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

to give their full attention to the discharge of their serious and important duties in regard to the affairs connected with the well-being of their own sex and the management of the household affairs and to looking after and bringing up of children and kindred matters. The fourth commandment enjoins husband and wife to have, as far as possible, sleeping apartments separate from those of other members of the family which even minor boys are not allowed to enter at stated hours.

In the expression لا يبدین زینتهن *i.e.* they display not their زينة (beauty), the word زينة includes both natural and artificial beauty. It signifies the beauty of person, and includes the beauty of dress and ornaments which women wear on their hands, feet, ears, arms, necks, bosoms, etc. The expression, "except that which is apparent thereof," contains all those things which it is not possible for a woman to cover such as her voice, gait or stature and also certain parts of her body which remain uncovered according to her social status, her family traditions, her avocation and the customs of the society. The permission to keep certain parts of the body uncovered will be subject to certain variations. Thus the words, "they display not their beauty" will have different connotations with regard to women belonging to different sections and grades of society and the connotation will change with the change in the customs and modes of living and professions of the people.

The words "and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known," show that public dancing which is so much in vogue in certain countries is definitely not allowed by Islam.

This is the Islamic conception of "purdah." According to it Muslim women may go out as often as it is legitimately necessary for them to do so, but their primary and principal functions are confined to their homes which are as important and serious, if not more, as the avocations of men are. If women take to men's avocations they seek to defy nature and nature does not allow its laws to be defied with impunity.

If it would be noticed that the incident about 'Āisha which forms one of the principal subjects of this *Sūra* sheds a flood of light on the form of "purdah" which Islam enjoins its followers to observe. According to tradition when Ṣafwān came to the place where 'Āisha was lying asleep with her face uncovered, he recognized her because he had seen her, as he himself afterwards said, before the verse about "purdah" was revealed (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Tafsīr*).

2615. Important Words :

أَيَّامِيَّ (widows) is the plural of أيم (ayyimun) which is derived from آم which means, he had no wife or he lost his wife by her death and he did not marry. They say آمت من زوجها *i.e.* she became bereft of her husband by his death

34. And those who find no *means* of marriage should keep themselves chaste, until Allah grants them means out of His bounty. And such as desire a *deed of manumission* in writing from among those whom your right hands possess, write it for them if you know any good in them; and give them out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you. And force not your maids to unchaste life *by keeping them unmarried* if they desire to keep chaste, in order that you may seek the gain of the present life. But if anyone forces them, then after their compulsion Allah will be Forgiving and Merciful to them. ²⁶¹⁶

وَلَيْسْتَغْفِرِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ
اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَآتُوهُمْ
مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرِهُوا فَتِيَتَكُمْ
عَلَى الْبِعَاثِ إِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ تَحْصِنَ لَّيَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِمْ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

or by being slain and remained without marrying. *آمت* also means, she had no husband, said of a virgin and of one who is not a virgin. *أيم* (*ayyimun*) means, a woman having no husband, whether she be a virgin or not or whether she had married before or not; a free woman, (Lane & Aqrab) also a man having no wife *Mufradāt*)

Commentary :

As mentioned above, this *Sūra* deals with some of those very heinous moral evils which if ignored and neglected are calculated to eat into the vitals of the society and shake its very foundations. One of these evils is adultery. In the preceding verses the *Sūra* has dealt with some of the causes that lead to the birth, growth and prevalence of this fell moral disease. Two of these causes are scandal-mongering and free and indiscriminate intermingling of the sexes and the third is that some women—widows or virgins, come to conceive a strong dislike for leading a married life, or their guardians, in order to further their own nefarious ends,

stand in the way of their marriage. In the verse under comment the Qur'ān has strongly urged the marriage of widows and virgins, the word *أيامى* covers both of them. In fact, Islam views with extreme disfavour the unmarried state. It regards the married state as the normal state. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: *i.e.* النكاح من سنتي و من رغب عن سنتي فليس مني "marriage is my *sunnat*" (usage or practice) and whoso disapproves and forsakes my *sunnat*, is not of me" (Muslim, *kitāb al-Nikāh*).

Preponderance of unmarried women in a society is sure to tell adversely upon its whole moral tone. The refusal on the part of unmarried women to accept the responsibilities of married life has led to the prevalence of moral laxity to which the West seems to have fallen a helpless victim. The verse strongly discourages unmarried life and does not recognize poverty as a bar to marriage.

2616. Important Words :

كاتب (write it for them). *كاتب* (*kātaba*) is derived from *كتب* (*kataba*) which means, he

wrote; he made a thing obligatory; or he prescribed a law. *كتب الله لأغلبن أنا ورسلي* i.e. Allah has decreed or has made it obligatory upon Himself that He and His Messengers will prevail (58:22). *كتب العبد* means, he made a written contract with the slave that the latter shall pay a certain sum as the price of his emancipation and then he shall earn his freedom (Lane & Aqrab). This civil written contract by means of which a slave can earn his manumission is called *مكاتبة* (*mukātabat*).

تحصن (keeping chaste) is derived from *حصن*, meaning, he or it was or became inaccessible, fortified or protected against attack. *حصنت المرأة* means, the woman was chaste i.e. protected herself against moral or sexual sinfulness. *أحصنت المرأة* means, the woman got married or she was chaste. *تحصن* (*tahassana*) means, he fortified himself or he entered the *حصن* i.e. fortress; or he protected himself by it; he guarded or protected himself in any way. *تحصنت المرأة* means, she was chaste (Lane & Aqrab). See also 4:25.

The expression *ان علمتم فيهم خيراً* (if you know any good in them) may mean (1) if you know that they are fit to work and earn their living; (2) if you know that after their manumission they will become useful members of the society.

Commentary :

We maintain that of all Divine Messengers and Prophets of God, of all Founders of different creeds, Faiths and religious systems, of all social reformers and philanthropists and of all those teachers and leaders of men, who, at any time, in any land and in any form, contributed to the social uplift and moral and spiritual regeneration of humanity, the share of Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam, was by far the largest. And one of the greatest services to mankind of this greatest and noblest of men was

his unequivocal and emphatic condemnation of, and the effective measures he took to abolish, those social injustices that were practised by one section of humanity against another. His mind rebelled and revolted against the then prevalent idea that man could be bought, sold and treated by man like chattel. His ideal of human brotherhood and the inborn and inherent equality of all men could scarcely be reconciled with the practice of slavery which was so widespread as to have become inextricably interwoven and deeply rooted in the social conditions and ideas of his time. His heart burnt to see the iniquities and enormities practised by man upon man. He grieved and pined for this unfortunate section of humanity. He would, if he could, abolish altogether by a stroke of the pen a system so repugnant and revolting, so destructive of all noble human instincts, of all that distinguishes man from beast and brute. But this institution had become an integral part of the whole fabric of human society in his time. To abolish it all of a sudden was neither wise, nor practicable or even possible. It should have meant a death-blow to the entire existing social order. The sudden emancipation in hundreds of thousands of those persons who having been held in bondage for generations had lost all initiative to lead an independent life, would have seriously told upon the whole moral tone of society. Jobless and workless they would have stooped to all sorts of immoral acts. This was exactly what the Holy Prophet sought to avoid and he did succeed in avoiding it. On the other hand, he laid down precepts and injunctions which were calculated to do away with slavery gradually but surely and effectively.

These injunctions were of two categories:

(i) Temporary provisions bearing upon the general improvement and betterment of the

moral and social conditions of the existing slaves and their speedy enfranchisement. Slaves were to be treated as members of the family as long as they were in bondage, and at the same time it was declared as a most heinous crime tantamount to murder to deprive a free man of his freedom and reduce him to slavery. (Muslim, *kitāb al-Īmān*). But those persons were excepted from this commandment who should themselves incur the loss of their freedom by participating in a war undertaken to destroy Islam and to impose their own beliefs and doctrines upon the Muslims at the point of the sword. Even this denial of freedom to war prisoners was to last only till those prisoners had discharged their share of the guilt, either by paying off their part of the cost of war by getting themselves ransomed or by the Muslims themselves setting them free as an act of favour which the Qur'ān has so repeatedly and emphatically enjoined on them (47 : 5). See also 23 : 7.

(ii) Provisions of a permanent nature aiming at the complete and total extinction of slavery in every shape or form. One of such provisions by means of which a slave could earn his emancipation, independently and irrespective of the fact whether his master liked it or not, was that he could enter into a civil written contract with the latter. It is this written contract which is known as *mukātabat* (deed of manumission) and to which the verse under comment refers. According to this contract a definite

amount of money or labour is fixed as the price of the freedom of a slave. After the contract is duly written and attested the slave is considered as manumitted and is free to earn the required amount of money by any legitimate means he likes. After he has paid the whole stipulated sum he is quite free. As to whether the slave is fit to enter into a contract of the above nature with his master is to be decided by the State and not by the master of the slave and also the amount of the money he has to pay and the manner and the time-limit of the payment. No choice is left to the owner if the slave applies for such a contract and the State considers him eligible to it with the conditions and stipulations proposed by it but to accept it. By this excellent arrangement Islam sought to secure to all slaves, who could not otherwise obtain freedom, their full emancipation and liberty, at the same time steering clear of the terrible social and moral evils to which the whole Muslim society would have fallen a helpless victim if slavery had been abolished with a stroke of the pen.

The verse has further urged the wealthy and the rich Muslims to help, with their money, those slaves who enter into *mukātabat* with their masters, to earn their emancipation.

The words *ومن يكرههم* (but if anyone forces them to remain unmarried) signify that the responsibility of keeping them from marriage will be that of their masters. They will not be accountable for this default.

35. "And We have sent down to you manifest Signs, and the example of those who have passed away before you, and an exhortation to the God-fearing.²⁶¹⁷

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ٢٥

5 36. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a *lustrous* niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star. It is lit from a blessed tree—an olive—neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well-nigh be ablaze even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to His light whomsoever He will. ^bAnd Allah sets forth parables to men, and Allah knows all things full well.²⁶¹⁸

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِثْلِهَا فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ٣٦

^a22 : 17 ; 57 : 10 ; 58 : 6. ^b14 : 62.

2617. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the highly illuminating and useful teaching which is embodied in the preceding verses is revealed by God that it may save Muslims from those deadly social evils of which mention has been made above and also from many others which flow from them.

2618. Important Words :

نور (light) is noun-infinitive from أنار. They say أنار الشيء *i.e.* the thing became bright and beautiful and manifest. أنار البيت means, he lit the house. أنار المسئلة means, he made the question clear and plain. نور means, light; that which makes a thing clear; light as opposed to darkness. نور is more extensive and more penetrating as well as more lasting in its significance than ضياء. It is also one of the names

of God (Aqrab & Muhit). See also 10 : 6.

الشكوة (niche) is derived from شكوا and شكوة is the opening of the small skin for water or milk called شكوة and showing what is in it. شك فلان means, the nails of such a one split in several places. They say شك الى الله, *i.e.* he complained of his case to God or he told God the weakness of his condition. مشكوة means, a niche in a wall; *i.e.* a hole or hollow in a wall, not extending through, in which a lamp placed therein gives more light than it gives elsewhere; a pillar or the like upon the top or head of which the lamp is put; or the iron things by means of which a lamp is suspended (Lane & Aqrab).

أصبح (a lamp), is derived from أصبح which means, he entered upon the time of morning; he rose in the middle of the night. They say أصبح القوم *i.e.* he came to the people in the morning.

38. By ^amen, whom neither merchandise nor traffic diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the observance of Prayer, and the giving of the Zakāt. They fear a day in which hearts and eyes will be agitated,²⁶²⁰

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا
تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ^{٢٨}

39. So that ^bAllah may give them the best reward of their deeds, and give them increase out of His bounty. And Allah does provide for whomsoever He pleases without measure.

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ^{٢٩}

40. And *as to* those who disbelieve, ^ctheir deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water until, when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing. And he finds Allah near him, Who then fully pays him his account; and Allah is swift at reckoning.²⁶²¹

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ
الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً خُتًى إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ
اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ^{٣٠}

^a63 10. ^b9 : 121 ; 16 : 98. ^c14 : 19.

the Holy Prophet became so honoured and respected that they became the objects of attraction and admiration for the whole world; and this fact testified to the Qur'ān being the revealed Word of God.

2620. Commentary :

The verse constitutes a great testimonial to the righteousness and goodness of the Holy Prophet's Companions and to their love for God and their liking for His remembrance. They are men, says the verse, of flesh and bones. They have their worldly ambitions and aspirations, their professions and avocations. They are not monks and hermits, cut apart from the world. Yet amidst all their material pursuits and engagements they do not neglect to discharge their duties to God and man. This certificate of merit which the Companions of

the Holy Prophet received from their Divine Lord and Master has been referred to in several other places in the Qur'ān, viz., "Those who, if We establish them in the earth will observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt and enjoin good and forbid evil" (22 : 42), and "Their sides keep away from their beds; and they call upon their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed upon them" (32 : 17). It is because of this life of righteousness and service of humanity that "Allah was well pleased with them, and they were well pleased with Him" (58 : 23).

2621. Important Words :

سرب (mirage) is derived from سرب. They say سرب الماء i.e. the water flowed. سرب الرجل means, the man went at random. سرب means, anything which on account of the heat of the

41. Or *their deeds* are like thick darkness in a vast and deep sea, which a wave covers, over which there is another wave, above which are clouds—layers of darkness, one upon another. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it; and he whom Allah gives no light—for him there is no light at all. ²⁶²²

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ
سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ
لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا
لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ ۚ

sun in the middle of the day appears as if it is water reflecting buildings and trees, etc; mirage. The Arabs say هو أخدع من السراب *i.e.* he is more deceptive than mirage (Aqrab).

قيعة (plain) is derived from قاع which means, he desisted, etc. قيعا is syn. with قاع and means, even place, plain or level land that produces nothing, low and free from mountains and herb-
age (Lane & Mufradāt). See 20 : 107.

Commentary :

See next verse.

2622. Important Words :

لججى (vast and deep) is relative noun from لجج (lujjun) which is derived from لَجَّ (lajja) which means, he persisted in wrangling. لَجَّ فِي أَمْرٍ means, he persisted or persevered in the affair, or he persisted obstinately in an affair, even if it became manifest that it was wrong; or he persisted in contention. لَجَّ بِجَهْتِ السَّفِينَةِ means, the boat entered the لَجَّة *i.e.* the main sea, or the fathomless deep, or the great expanse of sea of which the limits could not be seen. بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ means, a vast and deep sea (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In vv. 38-39 above an appreciative reference was made to a class of men—the lovers of Divine light and the righteous servants of God. The present and the immediately preceding verse speak of another class of people—the sons of darkness. People of one class accept the Divine Light and walk in it with the result that they are doubly blessed, both in this world and in the next. Their enviable condition is described in the simile, “light upon light.” The other class of people reject the Divine Light, choose to grope in the darkness of doubts and misgivings and hanker after the illusory and transient pleasures and profits of this world and end by incurring God’s displeasure. All their works prove futile and deceptive like a mirage. They love darkness, follow darkness and live in darkness and thus their unenviable condition has been very aptly and graphically described in the words, “their deeds are like thick darkness in a vast and deep sea, covered by a wave, over which is a wave, above which are clouds—layers of darkness, one upon another.”

R.6 42. Hast thou not seen that "it is Allah Whose praises, all who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate, and so do the birds with their wings outspread? Each one knows his own *mode of prayer and praise*. And Allah knows well what they do."²⁶²³

43. ^bAnd to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah shall be the return.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَالطَّيْرِ صَفٌّ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a17 : 45 ; 59 : 25 ; 61 : 2 ; 62 : 2. ^b3 : 190 ; 5 : 121.

2623. Commentary :

The word من (who) taken to mean both animate and inanimate things, the expression "who are in the heavens and the earth and the birds with their wings outstretched" would signify three classes of beings *i.e.* (1) angels of the heaven; (2) animate and inanimate things which live upon or are related to the earth such as man, animals, vegetables, and minerals; (3) and the birds which fly in the air. Taken in a spiritual sense, the words "who are in the heavens," would mean persons of very high spiritual status, and "who are in the earth" would signify those unfortunate worldly-minded persons whose whole attention and efforts are devoted to material pursuits and who have no thought or time for spiritual things, and the words "the birds with their wings outstretched" would apply to those people whose spiritual condition is midway between that of the two above-mentioned categories. At one time they soar spiritually so high as to touch the very confines of the celestial firmament and at another time

sink so low as to grovel in the dirt and dust of the earth.

The words كل قد علم صلاته و تسبيحه may mean: (i) each one of these beings and things knows his or its own mode of prayer and praise; (ii) God knows the reality of the prayer and praise of each one of these classes, God being the subject of the verb علم. Moreover, whereas the clause "Whose praises all who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate," refers to the collective testimony that the whole universe bears to the Unity and Holiness of God the words, "each one knows his own mode of prayer and praise," refer to the evidence which everything bears to Divine Unity and Holiness individually and separately by carrying out faithfully the task allotted to it by God. This may be the significance of the words "his own mode of prayer and praise." الصلاة (prayer) has different meanings with reference to different objects; used about God, it means Divine mercy; used about angels, it means their asking forgiveness of God for men and used about men it means the prescribed form of Prayer (Lane & Aqrab).

44. Hast thou not seen that "Allah drives the clouds, then joins them together, then piles them up so that thou seest rain issue forth from the midst thereof? And He sends down from the sky *clouds like* mountains wherein is hail, and He smites therewith whom He pleases, and turns it away from whom He pleases. The flash of its lightning may well-nigh take away the sight.²⁶²⁴

الْم تَرَانَّ اللَّهُ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ
يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَ
يُنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ
بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا
بَرْقُهُ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ ط

430 : 49. 13 : 14.

2624. Important Words :

رُكَّامًا (piles up) is derived from رَكَمَ. They say رَكَمَ الشَّيْءُ i.e. he heaped up, piled up or accumulated the thing; he collected together the thing and put one part of it upon another. رُكَّامٌ means, clouds or sand collected together and piled up (Lane & Aqrab).

وَدْقٌ (rain) is derived from the root وَدَقَ (wadaqa). They say وَدَقَ إِلَيْهِ i.e. he became near to him. وَدَقَ السَّمَاءُ means, it rained. وَدَقَ السَّيْفُ means, the sword became sharp. الْوَدْقُ means, rain, violent or gentle (Lane & Aqrab).

سَنَا (flash) is infinitive noun from سَنَّا (sanā). They say سَنَّتِ النَّارُ i.e. the fire became high in its light. سَنَّا الْبَرْقُ means, the lightning shone, shone brightly or gleamed or shot up. سَنَا means, light, or the light of lightning; or light shining or diffusing itself and rising, a high light; shining of weapons (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse gives another simile about the spiritual development of man and about the changes and processes which it undergoes to reach its perfection. The knowledge of such changes and processes is essential to the spiritual pilgrim because without such knowledge he may not

know what turnings and cross-roads he may have to meet on the way and consequently may despair of success. The verse purports to say that man's spiritual development is like the formation of clouds from vapours. It begins in this way. The sun of God's love and grace shines upon that inexhaustible store of man's capacity to receive and assimilate the Divine Word with which he has been endowed and then it raises vapours which are moved about by the winds of Divine mercy. Just as in the earlier stages the vapours are not visible, so does the change wrought in the pilgrim's mind by the Sun of Divine love and grace remain unfelt in the earlier stages of his spiritual development with the result that the impatient spiritual way-farer sometimes loses patience and gives up the endeavour in despair. The simile points out that like invisible vapours which assume a visible form, the change in man's moral and spiritual progress under Divine mercy assumes a palpable form and begins to be dimly perceptible. But the character and nature of the change is still in a formative stage, where it has not yet attained fixity and strength enough to be helpful to others. The progress, however, continues till like

45. Allah alternates the night and the day. Therein surely is a lesson for those who have eyes.²⁶²⁵

يَقْلِبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً
لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٢٥﴾

46. *And Allah has created every animal from water. Of them are *some* that go upon their bellies, and of them are *some* that go upon two feet, and among them are *some* that go upon four. Allah creates what He pleases. Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He pleases.²⁶²⁶

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي
عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ
يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

²⁵ : 55.

vapours that condense and take the form of showers of rain and sometimes of hail, the God-intoxicated spiritual way-farer, who has donned the mantle of a Divine Messenger, becomes *بشير* i.e. the Bearer of good news for the believers and *نذير* i.e. Warner for those who reject the Heavenly messages. Even among the believers his influence is not uniform; some benefit by his precept and practice more than the others according to their natural aptitudes, as are the different parts of earth benefited by rain according to the nature of the soil.

Or the significance of the verse may be that for some the revealed Law serves as timely rain which proves highly beneficial and for others it takes the form of hail and storm which brings in its wake destruction and ruin.

2625. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the spiritual development of man referred to in the preceding verse is not always uniform and uninterrupted.

Sometimes it is very rapid, at another time it is slow and yet some other time it come to a dead stop. This ebb and flow in the spiritual development of man is called *قبض* (contraction) and *بسط* (expansion) or the alternation of night and day in spiritual terminology. Everything in the world is subject to the law of acceleration and retardation and so is the spiritual evolution of man.

2626. Commentary :

This verse describes the nature and form of the progress of spiritual pilgrims to their destined goal. The progress of some of them is extremely slow. They creep and crawl to their destination. Others go quicker like animals that move on two legs, yet others go faster like four-legged animals. What is hinted at here is speed and not the method of locomotion. The four-legged animals are, as a rule, speedier of movement than the bipeds or the crawlers. The same is the case with the spiritual travellers.

47. We have indeed sent down manifest Signs. And Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبِينَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And they say, 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey;' then after that some of them turn away. But such are not believers.

وَيَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ مَن بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. "And when they are called to Allah and His Messenger that he may judge between them, lo! a party of them turn away.

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. And if *they consider* the right to be on their side, they come to him running in *all* submission.²⁶²⁷

وَأِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. Is it that there is a disease in their hearts? Or do they doubt, or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them? Nay, it is they themselves who are the wrongdoers.²⁶²⁸

أَفَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

43 : 24.

2627. Important Words :

مذعنين (running in all submission) is active participle from أذعن which is derived from ذعن. They say أذعن له i.e. he was or became quick in obedience to him or it; he was or became humble to him ; he confessed to him. The Quranic words يأتوا اليه مذعنين mean, they come quickly inobedience (Lane & Aqrab).

2628. Commentary :

The verse signifies that disbelievers suffer from one or all of the three spiritual diseases or that some of them suffer from one disease and others from other diseases.

In fact, the three main things that stand in the way of a man's spiritual progress and retard and arrest it, are doubt, fear and envy. These must be conquered before any real and substantial progress is possible.

٢. 7 52. The response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, is only that they say: 'We hear and we obey.' And it is they who will prosper.^{2628A}

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. "And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and takes Him as a shield for protection, it is they who will be successful.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that, if thou command them, they will surely go forth. Say, 'Swear not; what is required is obedience in what is right. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.'²⁶²⁹

وَأَقْسُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لِنِ أَمْرَتِهِمْ لِيُخْرِجُوهُمْ قُلْ لَا تُقْسُوا طَاعَةً مَعْرُوفَةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. Say, "Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger." But if you turn away, then upon him is his burden, and upon you is your burden. And if you obey him, you will be rightly guided. "And the Messenger is not responsible but for the plain delivery of the message.

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٥﴾

^a4 : 47. ^b5 : 93; 64 : 13. ^c4 : 14 ; 33 : 72 ; 48:18. ^d16 : 36 29 : 19; 36 : 18.

2628A. Commentary :

The present and adjacent verses point to a basic and most fundamental Islamic principle, viz., that Islam is a perfect code of laws and its injunctions and commandments cover all the different aspects of human life and the Holy Prophet is the final authority on all matters that concern the national life of Muslims. See also 4 : 66

2629. Important Words :

جهد (their strongest oaths). جهد means,

he strove or laboured; he exerted himself; he employed himself vigorously or with energy; he took extraordinary pains. جهد في الامر means, he did his utmost or used his utmost power in prosecuting the affair. جهد (jahdun) means, utmost power or ability or extraordinary painstaking, etc. جهد أيمانهم means, the most solemn; strongest or most forcible or energetic oaths (Lane & Aqrab).

56. Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors *from among* those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security *and peace* after their fear: They will worship Me, *and* they will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.²⁶³⁰

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ
وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي
وَلَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

2630. **Commentary :**

This verse deals with one of the most vital Islamic principles. The *Sūra* under comment enjoys this distinction that in no other *Sūra* has so much light been shed from the point of view of Islam on so many important moral, social and political problems as in this *Sūra*. While the preceding few *Sūras* dealt with the great and triumphant future of Islam, this *Sūra* tells us how the promised bright future of Islam will take a material shape. Whereas in verse 36 above an implied reference was made to *Khilāfat* which was to be the main instrument for establishment of the spiritual and political hegemony of Islam, the present verse deals with the subject of *Khilāfat* in clear and unmistakable terms. The preceding few verses, *i.e.* vv. 52-55, however, serve as a prelude to its introduction. In these verses emphasis is repeatedly laid on obedience to Allah and His Messenger. This emphasis implies a hint to the status and position of the *Khalīfa* in Islam. Being the Successor of a Prophet he must be given unconditional obedience.

The present verse embodies a promise that Muslims will be vouchsafed both spiritual and temporal leadership. The promise is made to

the whole Muslim nation but the institution of *Khilāfat* will take a palpable form in the person of certain individuals who will be the Prophet's Successors and the representatives of the whole nation. They will be, as it were, *Khilāfat* personified. The verse further says that the fulfilment of this promise will depend on the Muslims' observing the Prayer and giving the *Zakāt* and on their obeying the Messenger of God in all religious and temporal matters concerning the nation. When they will have fulfilled these conditions, the boon of *Khilāfat* will be bestowed upon them and they will be made the leaders of nations; their state of fear will give place to a condition of safety and security, Islam will reign supreme in the world, and above all the Oneness and Unity of God—the real purpose and object of Islam—will become firmly established.

The promise of the establishment of *Khilāfat* is clear and unmistakable. As the Holy Prophet is now humanity's sole guide for all time, his *Khilāfat* must continue to exist in one form or another in the world till the end of time, all other *Khilāfats* having ceased to exist. This is among many others the Holy Prophet's distinct superiority over all other Prophets and

Messengers of God. Our age has witnessed his greatest spiritual *Khalifain* the person of Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah.

The Qur'ān has mentioned three kinds of *Khalifās*:

(1) *Khalifās*, who are Prophets such as Adam and David. About Adam God says in the Qur'ān, "I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth" (2 : 31) and about David He says: "O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth" (38 : 27).

(2) Prophets who are the *Khalifās* of another and a greater Prophet such as the Israelite Prophets who all were the *Khalifās* of Moses. About them the Qur'ān says: "We have sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to Us judge for the Jews" (5 : 45).

(3) Non-Prophet *Khalifās* of a Prophet, with or without temporal powers, such as godly people learned in the Law. Their mission is to protect and preserve the law from being tampered with (5 : 45).

Briefly, the verse under comment covers all these categories of *Khalifās*, viz., the Holy Prophet's rightly-guided *Khalifās*, the Promised Messiah, his Successors and the spiritual Reformers or *Mujaddids*. Their mission, as the above verse says, is to protect the Law and to bring back "the erring flock into the Master's fold."

The special marks and characteristics of these *Khalifās* are:

(a) They are appointed *Khalifās* through God's own decree in the sense that the hearts of believers become inclined towards them & they voluntarily accept them as their *Khalifās*.

(b) the religion which their mission is to serve becomes firmly established through their prayers and missionary efforts;

(c) they enjoy equanimity and peace of mind amidst hardships, privations or persecution which nothing can disturb; and

(d) they worship God alone, i.e. in the discharge of their great responsibilities they fear no one and they carry on their duties undaunted and without being discouraged or dismayed by the difficulties that stand in their way.

The verse may also be regarded as embodying a prophecy which was made at a time when Islam was very weak and idols were being worshipped throughout Arabia and the Muslims being small in number feared for their very lives, and yet in the course of only a generation the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Idolatry disappeared from Arabia and Islam became firmly established not only in Arabia but also reigned supreme in the whole world and the followers of the Holy Prophet, erstwhile regarded as the dregs and scum of humanity, became the leaders and teachers of nations.

The words, "Whosoever is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious," signify that *Khilāfat* is a great Divine blessing. Without it there can be no solidarity, cohesion and unity among Muslims and therefore they can make no real progress without it. If Muslims do not show proper appreciation of *Khilāfat* by giving unstinted support and obedience to their *Khalifās* they will forfeit this great Divine boon and in addition will draw the displeasure of God upon themselves.

57. "And observe Prayer and give the Zakāt and obey the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy."²⁶³¹

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرُّسُولَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Think not that those who disbelieve can frustrate *Our plan* in the earth; their abode is Hell; and it is indeed an evil resort."²⁶³²

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا لَهُمُ النَّارُ وَلَيْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. O ye who believe! let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not attained to puberty, ask leave of you at three times *before coming into your presence*: before the morning Prayer, and when you take off your clothes at noon *in summer* and after the night Prayer. *These are three times of privacy for you. At times other than these there is no blame on you or on them, for they have to move about waiting upon you, some of you attending upon others. Thus does Allah make plain to you the Signs; for Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.*"²⁶³³

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ
مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ
مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ
لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ
طَوُفُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾

422 : 78.

2631. Commentary :

The verse describes the three essential conditions on the fulfilment of which depends the fulfilment of the Divine promise about the establishment of *Khilāfat*.

2632. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the kingdom and dominion of the world will be bestowed upon the followers of Islam and they will become the leaders and teachers of mankind. It is God's plan and His decree and no one can frustrate

Divine decree. All efforts on the part of the enemies of truth to alter this inviolable Divine decree will end in failure. As long as *Khilāfat* will endure among Muslims as an active force Muslims will march from success to success.

2633. Important Words :

مرّات (times) is the plural of مرّة which is infinitive noun from مر which means, he or it passed. مرّ الدهر means, the time passed. مرّة means, a time; one time; one action; a single action

60. And when the children among you attain to puberty, they *too* should ask permission, even as those *mentioned* before them asked permission. Thus does Allah make plain to you His commandments; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.²⁶³⁴

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا
اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. *As to* elderly women, who have no desire for marriage—there is no blame on them if they lay aside their *outer* clothing without displaying their beauty. But to abstain *from that* even is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.²⁶³⁵

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ
مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

or act; turn; also an occasion. فعلته مرة means, I did it once (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The subject of “purdah,” as stated under v. 32 above has been referred to at four different places in the Qur’ān. Whereas 24 : 32 deals with “purdah” primarily within four walls of the house, v. 33 : 60 discusses “purdah” outside the house and on thoroughfares while vv. 33 : 33-34 speak of a restricted kind of “purdah,” particularly enjoined on the Holy Prophet’s wives and by implication on all Muslim women, and by inference point to the fact that the principal centre of a woman’s activities is her home. The present verse, however, refers to another kind of “purdah,” viz., that domestic servants and minor children too should not enter the private apartments of their masters or parents at three particular hours mentioned here without getting prior permission.

2634. Commentary :

The words قبلهم may mean, (i) those persons who have been mentioned in v. 28 above;

or (ii) those who have attained puberty before them.

2635. Important Words :

قواعد (elderly women) is the plural of قاعد and قاعده, and قاعد is active participle from قعد which means, he sat. They say قعدت عن تعدت عن i.e she ceased to bear children or to have the menstrual discharge. قعدت المرأة means, the woman lost her husband. قاعد means, a woman who has ceased to bear children or to have the menstrual discharge or to have a husband; an old woman, advanced in years. قاعد امرأة is like حامل امرأة i.e. a pregnant woman (Mufradāt, Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse shows that even old women are not allowed to display their finery or ornaments and the beauty of their person and form or countenance to strangers. In the expression ان يضعن ثيابهن the particle ان is مصدرية and the meaning, is their laying aside their clothing.

62. There is no harm for the blind, and there is no harm for the lame, and there is no harm for the sick and none for yourselves, that you eat from your own houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or *from* that of which the keys are in your possession, or *from the house of* a friend of yours. There is no harm for you whether you eat together or separately. But "when you enter houses, salute your people—a greeting from your Lord, full of blessing and purity. Thus does Allah make plain to you the commandments, that you may understand."²⁶³⁶

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالَاتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٦٣٦﴾

424 : 28.

2636. Commentary :

This verse deals with some rules of social conduct. These rules are intended to dispose of those foolish prejudices that prevail among certain sections of human society and tend to restrict free intercourse between the rich and the poor. Islam enjoins complete social equality and is the avowed enemy of division of people within water-tight compartments. Here it has stressed the importance and usefulness of free social intercourse and collective dining among all classes of society, and has encouraged and preferred eating together to promote familiarity and to remove those bars that keep apart people of different social standing, though it has not disallowed eating separately.

The Arabs and Jews had scruples to eat with the blind or with persons suffering from certain social disabilities, as the Hindus of India even to this day do not eat or sit with the "untouchables." Islam looks askance at all such practices and encourages interdining and free intercourse among all classes and sections of people.

The expression *بُيُوتِكُمْ* (your own houses) includes the houses of one's sons, and daughters because in the following list of the houses where one can eat freely the houses of sons and daughters are omitted while, being the nearest relatives, they should have been mentioned first of all.

٢. 9

63. Those only are *true* believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and who, when they are with him on some matter *of common concern* which has brought *them* together, go not away until they have asked leave of him. Surely, those who ask leave of thee, it is they who *really* believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, when they ask thy leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to those of them whom thou pleasest, and ask forgiveness for them of Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁶³⁷

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا
كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ
فَآذَنَ لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

2637. Important Words :

جامع (which has brought them together) is derived from جمع which means, he collected; assembled; brought together; it comprised, comprehended or contained. They say جمع امره *i.e.* he arranged or settled his affair. The Arabs say جمع الله شمله *i.e.* may God unite his disorganised state of affairs. امر جامع means, an affair that brings people together; or a momentous or important affair on account of which people gather together as though the affair itself gathers them (Lane, Mufradāt & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The several preceding verses contained directions for Muslims as how to conduct themselves in affairs of social importance. The present verse, however, deals with affairs of national importance. The Muslims are enjoined that when they are with the Holy Prophet, engaged

in transacting a business of national importance, they are not to leave the assembly without his permission. It may also be inferred from this verse that in affairs concerning a whole nation or community, the individual loses his independence of action. He must abide by the decision arrived at by the assembly of Muslims presided over by the Prophet, his Successor or their accepted and elected leader. When a person withdraws himself from such assembly, he in fact, deprives himself of the opportunity to contribute his share to the good of Islam and Muslims and consequently to that extent he becomes deprived of God's grace and mercy. The Holy Prophet, therefore, has been told to ask forgiveness of Allah for such an individual for an inadvertent lapse on his part. Islam is very sensitive about the maintenance of a living relationship between an individual Muslim and the Central Authority of the Muslim Community.

64. Treat not the calling of the Messenger among you like the calling of one of you to another. Allah does know "those of you who steal away covertly. So let those who go against His command beware lest a trial afflict them or a grievous punishment overtake them."²⁶³⁸

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا
قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا فَلْيَحْذَرِ
الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ
يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Hearken ye! ^bTo Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. He does know in what condition you are. And on the day when they will be returned unto Him, He will inform them of what they did. And Allah knows everything full well.²⁶³⁹

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾

a9 : 127. b2 : 285 ; 10 : 56 ; 31 : 27.

2638. Commentary :

The verse contains another very important commandment. The Prophet's or the Leader's call is not to be treated lightly. It must be accorded the respect it deserves, as it always concerns highly important affairs. The verse may also mean that the privacy of the Prophet or the Leader should not be intruded upon, and unnecessary demands should not be made upon his very precious time, and when addressed he should be treated with the respect due to his very exalted position. In fact, reverence and respect paid where it is due, is recognised by Islam as an effective means of spiritual advancement.

The words, "lest an affliction befall them," refer to such mundane affairs of the community in which the Prophet's counsel is not sought or it is ignored. The clause, "lest a grievous punish-

ment overtake them," however, refers to religious affairs of the Muslim Community regarding which the Prophet's or the *Khalifa's* command is not obeyed and is not loyally carried out.

2639. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the commandments and injunctions given above are meant for the social, moral and spiritual uplift of Muslims, and, as God is the sole Master of all that is in the heavens and the earth, therefore, no real and enduring progress is possible without giving unstinted and unconditional obedience to His commandments.

The words, "Allah knows everything full well," mean that God knows full well what particular commandment is needed for a community in a certain situation. So His commandments entail no real embarrassment to Muslims and cannot be disobeyed with impunity.

CHAPTER 25

A L-FURQĀN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

The preponderance of scholarly opinion regards this *Sūra* as of Meccan origin. According to Ibn ‘Abbās and Qatādah, however, vv. 69-71, belong to the Medinite period. ‘Umar, as reported by Bukharī, Muslim, and Baihaqī, on one occasion heard Hishām bin Ḥakīm recite this *Sūra* in Prayer. Hishām had recited it in a manner which ‘Umar thought was different from that in which he had heard the Holy Prophet recite it. He was exasperated and had almost assaulted Hishām but restrained himself with great effort. Hishām had hardly finished his Prayer when ‘Umar caught hold of him and asked him from whom he had learnt to recite the *Sūra* in the way he had done. Hishām replied that he had learnt it from the Holy Prophet himself. Upon this ‘Umar took him to the Prophet and related the whole incident. The Prophet asked Hishām to recite the *Sūra* again and when he did so exactly in the manner to which ‘Umar had taken strong exception, the Holy Prophet said, “It is precisely in this form that the *Sūra* has been revealed.” Then the Holy Prophet asked ‘Umar to recite the portion concerning which there was difference of opinion between the two and when ‘Umar did so, the Prophet told him that he was also right, and added that the Qur’ān had been revealed in seven different readings or dialects and told him to recite it in the manner in which he found it easy to do so (Qadīr).

This incident shows that variations in the readings of the Qur’ān in which some prejudiced western Orientalists and Christian missionaries pretend to have found a basis for casting doubts upon the purity of the Quranic text were merely differences in the pronunciation and dialects of the various Arab tribes and such differences of enunciation abounded in the Arabic language. Arabia, in the Holy Prophet’s time, was surrounded on all sides by powerful nations which were superior to and different from the Arabs in culture and civilization. On one side of Arabia was situated Abyssinia, on the other Iran and its third side was adjacent to the Jews and the Arameans while on the fourth side India was its immediate neighbour. It was impossible that the language of a people surrounded on all sides by such powerful and highly cultured nations should have remained unaffected. Under their impact differences of dialect and pronunciation naturally arose among different Arab tribes. Some of them could easily pronounce certain letters while others could not do so. One tribe pronounced a certain letter in one way, the other in another. Some Arab tribes, for instance, could pronounce the letter “ج” with ease while others could not, and had to substitute “ق” or some other letter for it. Now it would have greatly helped all these various tribes to recite the Qur’ān if they were allowed the use of both these letters. This is exactly what the Holy Prophet did, because in the other case it would have been very difficult for some Arab tribes to learn the Qur’ān.

In view of differences in dialect and pronunciation, the Holy Prophet, in the beginning, allowed the use of substitute letters which enabled the various Arab tribes to read and learn the Qur'ān with ease and in this way he succeeded in solving a difficult problem. As it was a new and uncommon experiment and adoption of such a method had not occurred to any one before, therefore, people in the beginning found it hard to adapt themselves to it and every tribe was led to think that the Qur'ān had been revealed in that tribe's own particular dialect. So if they found that a certain tribe pronounced some Quranic words differently or used letters not familiar to them they thought it was guilty of tampering with the text of the Qur'ān. The Holy Prophet, therefore, had repeatedly to explain this fact in the beginning of his ministry. But when gradually Muslims came to understand the implications of this method they realized that it was not only not a defect and did not in any way interfere with the meaning of the Qur'ān but rather in certain cases actually enlarged and expanded it and made the reading of the Qur'ān equally easy for every tribe. This is why the Holy Prophet in the early years of his ministry allowed Muslims to read the Qur'ān in the manner in which they found it easy to do so. This permission shows that variation in reading was concerned with only the letters and not with the meaning or sense of the Qur'ān.

Those who assign vv. 69-71 to the Medinite period base their assumption on the fact that because these verses contain commandments forbidding murder, adultery, etc., and because detailed ordinances of the *Shari'at* were revealed only at Medina, therefore, these commandments must have been revealed at Medina. But this assumption possesses no weight or substance. In fact, commandments forbidding adultery and murder were revealed at Mecca, and the fact that Muslims had begun scrupulously to avoid these deadly sins and to lead very pure and righteous lives while at Mecca lends great weight to the view that these commandments must have been revealed there. So the assumption that because these verses forbid adultery, murder and other kindred vices, therefore, they were revealed at Medina possesses no foundation in fact.

Certain western writers regard this *Sūra* to have been revealed at Mecca very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry. They attribute this inference to the absence of any reference to persecution of Muslims on the part of the Quraish which, they say, began some years later. This assumption is also too flimsy to merit serious consideration. This is like saying that because some Medinite *Sūras* are almost devoid of any mention of disbelievers, therefore, no fighting had taken place between Muslims and disbelievers in the Medinite period.

Connection with the Preceding *Sūra*

The preceding *Sūra*, Al-Nūr, had ended on a note about the very great importance and usefulness of the Islamic Organization. That *Sūra* had also stated that certain Muslims were unacquainted with its great potentialities and were afraid of the organization of disbelievers which was rotten to the core. The present *Sūra* gives the reasons why the fear of the weak-minded people is but an illusion and a figment of their own diseased imagination and does not exist in fact. The argument proceeds thus: The Qur'ān claims to have been sent as a warning for the whole world and as its teaching is in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, therefore, those who defy it would not only be guilty of defying a revealed teaching but would also be contravening nature itself. So the followers of no religious system and the inhabitants of no country could successfully withstand

Muslims who believed the Qur'ān to be the revealed Word of God and acted upon its teaching, because it was not possible to defy the laws of nature. When such is the case, those of weak faith among Muslims who fear the organization of disbelief are afraid of an imaginary thing and their fear is unreal.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with the categorical statement that the message of the Qur'ān is meant for the whole of mankind. It proceeds to say that the Almighty God Who has revealed the Qur'ān is the sole and undisputed Master of the heavens and the earth. He is One and has no peer. He is the sole Creator of every atom of the universe. His Word, therefore, is and must be in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, hence its acceptance or rejection does not merely mean the acceptance or rejection of a revealed Law but amounts to submission to or violation of the laws of nature itself.

The *Sūra* further says that whereas disbelievers find it difficult to deny the excellence and superiority of the teaching of the Qur'ān, they take refuge behind the subterfuge that it is not the work of a single individual but is the result of the combined effort of many persons. They further allege that its teaching has been plagiarized from old Scriptures. But these pleas of disbelievers possess no substance because, the *Sūra* says, if the Qur'ān had been the work of collective human effort, it could not have possessed a teaching which it is beyond the power of man to produce. And if it had been merely a copy of the ancient Scriptures, those Scriptures should also have possessed the excellences and beauties possessed by it but that is not the case.

Next, another foolish plea of disbelievers is mentioned, viz., that the Holy Prophet is a mere mortal who eats and drinks and goes about as an ordinary man. "Why has not God," they say, "sent an angel with him to bear witness to the truth of his mission? Or why has he not been given treasures of wealth or gardens, or why at all should they follow a liar and an impostor?" Thus the disbelievers drift from one plea to another, but the Qur'ān stigmatizes all this as confused and incoherent talk and condemns and reprimands the enemies of truth for not sticking to one point or line of argument and proceeds to tell impatient disbelievers that God will certainly give the Holy Prophet and his followers better things than what they demand of him—much better gardens than those of their conception. But they should not get impatient but should wait for the time when all these things will come to pass. The *Sūra* further says that when that time would actually arrive they would be severely disappointed, but their disappointment would in no way benefit them, on the contrary it would prove a source of growing and enduring mortification for them.

The *Sūra* then further elaborates and answers some of the worn-out and hackneyed objections of disbelievers. One such objection, as mentioned above, is that the Holy Prophet is a mere mortal and is subject to the demands of the flesh. In answer to this objection the *Sūra* asks the disbelievers, whether the former Prophets were not human and whether they were not subject to human needs and wants. If such is the case, then is not their objection foolish and flimsy? Another objection is, "why do not angels descend upon us and why does not God speak to us?" In answer to this objection disbelievers are told that angels will certainly descend but only to punish them for their evil deeds. The day of punishment will be the day of Decision and the Prophet will bear witness against them.

Next, the *Sūra* refers to some more objections of disbelievers and after answering them passes on to warn them that they will meet with no better fate than the one with which the opponents of the Prophets of yore had met. Further on, the Holy Prophet is consoled and comforted that if he is held up to scorn and ridicule, it is only natural that it should have been so, because the enemies of truth had always rejected truth. His enemies were no exception; their hearts too had become devoid of all noble feelings.

Then, a brief reference is made to the law of the rise and fall of nations and disbelievers are warned that the time of their decadence and downfall and that of the rise, progress and prosperity of Muslims has already arrived. They may not reconcile themselves to the fact that a Prophet could have been raised among them. But a Prophet must belong to some country, and the disbelievers are asked as to which country the Holy Prophet should have belonged so as to be acceptable to all peoples. Or do they mean that every people should have had a separate Prophet? This would have given rise to innumerable differences and disagreements. The disbelievers are told that these are all foolish objections and the Holy Prophet is enjoined to pay no heed to them and to continue to preach his Message.

After this the *Sūra* proceeds to invite the attention of disbelievers to the phenomenon that God had made two waters, one bitter and the other sweet, both flowing side by side. They continue their parallel course and do not mix with each other. Similarly, the Quranic teaching and the teachings of other religions will continue to exist side by side so that by comparing them people might distinguish the true from the false and the sweet from the bitter. Then the *Sūra* asks believers the very pertinent question, viz., why can't they understand this simple thing that just as all physical life springs from water, similarly all spiritual life is dependent for its existence on the life-giving water of Divine revelation? And adds that disbelievers are given to and persist in idolatrous practices. The duty of the Holy Prophet is, therefore, confined to preaching to them and admonishing them. But they will never believe in the One True God and will not worship Him to Whose Unity the whole creation bears undeniable testimony. They should understand and realize that just as the solar system gives life and light, similarly the light of virtue follows the darkness of vice.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to mention a few peculiar signs and marks of those righteous servants of God who by acting upon the teaching of the Qur'ān attain to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence. It says that the righteous servants of God seek and strive to establish peace and harmony in the world. They worship their Lord and pray to Him and return good for evil and spend their hard-earned money in good and righteous causes. They do not associate false gods with Allah, neither do they commit murder nor fornication. They do not tell lies, they shun all vain and purposeless pursuits, and when God is mentioned their hearts become filled with reverential awe. They pray that their wives and children should prove the joy of their eyes. They seek to become the leaders of the righteous and God-fearing men and do not hanker after worldly leadership. These are the blessed people who will enjoy eternal life.

The *Sūra* closes with a pointed reference to the great truth that God has created man to serve a very sublime and noble object and whosoever fails to fulfil this object will forfeit God's mercy and grace.

سُورَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٥)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.²⁶⁴⁰

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Blessed is He Who has sent down the Discrimination to His servant, that he may be a Warner to *all* the worlds—²⁶⁴¹

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ②

^a See 1 : 1.

2640. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

2641. **Commentary :**

The word تَبَارَكَ means, highly exalted, far removed from every defect, impurity, imperfection, or from everything derogatory, and possessing abundant good (6 : 156 & 24 : 36). This attribute has been very appropriately used in connection with the revelation of the Qur'ān as it possesses all the qualities and attributes implicit in this word. The Qur'ān is not only completely free from every defect and imperfection but possesses all the conceivable excellent qualities that the last Divine Law for the whole of mankind must possess and it possesses these qualities in an abundant measure.

The word فُرْقَان (Discrimination) is applied to something which differentiates between what is true and what is false. It also means an argument, a proof, or evidence, because an argument or a proof also serves to discriminate between right and wrong. The word also means, morning or dawn, because dawn distinguishes the day from night. It also means, aid or support, because a person who receives help and support from another person becomes marked from him

against whom help is sought to be given. See also 2 : 54. The Qur'ān has been called "The Discrimination" in the verse under comment because it possesses all the various qualities and attributes which flow from the root فرق from which the word فُرْقَان has been derived. Among the multifarious and multitudinous beauties and excellences that distinguish the Qur'ān from other revealed Books and which establish its superiority over them all, two stand out most marked, viz., it makes no statement or claim in support of which it does not bring forward sound and solid proofs and arguments, and it makes truth so distinguishable from falsehood as day is from night. The Qur'ān has been called فُرْقَان in the verse under comment while, in the preceding Chapter, Divine revelation had been compared to نور (light) because the functions of both فُرْقَان and نور are the same. Both mark out truth from falsehood. The Qur'ān is both نور (Light) and فُرْقَان (Discrimination) because it possesses this quality in an abundant measure and among all Divinely revealed Scriptures it stands unique in making this claim and such a claim is also quite natural on its part as it is humanity's sole guide till the end of time.

The subject of لِيَكُونَ being understood, it may be either God or the Holy Prophet or the

3. He to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. "And He has taken unto Himself no son, and has no partner in the kingdom, and has created everything, and has ordained for it *its* proper measure."²⁶⁴²

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ
تَقْدِيرًا ۝

2 : 117; 10 : 69; 17 : 112; 18 : 5; 19 : 89; 21 : 27; 39 : 5; 43 : 82.

ليكون للعالمين قديرا
قديرا may mean that God or the Holy Prophet or the Qur'ān may be a warner to all the worlds.

2642. Commentary :

The most fundamental and pivotal teaching of the Qur'ān, round which all its other teachings revolve, is the belief in the Oneness of God and it is for the dissemination and establishment of this belief on earth that it has primarily been revealed. The present and the next few verses mention the following six indispensable attributes which the Divine Being Who alone should command our adoration and unconditional and unreserved surrender and submission must possess: (i) He should be the sole and undisputed Master of what is in the heavens and the earth; (ii) He should need no son to succeed Him or help Him in the control and governance of the universe; (iii) there should be no one to dispute with Him the possession or control of this kingdom; (iv) He should have created everything and have endowed it with proper qualities and attributes and should have ordained proper measure for its continued existence and development; (v) unlike false deities He should have the power to do good or harm; and (vi) He should possess complete control over life and death. God, the Almighty possesses all these

qualities in full measure; and as He is the Creator of heavens and earth and the undisputed Master of everything that is in and between them, His word must be, and in fact is, in perfect harmony with the laws of nature and therefore its rejection or acceptance constitutes not only the denial or acceptance of a revealed Law but amounts also to flouting or submitting to the laws of nature.

The word ولد is used for both male and female and for singular and plural forms. Thus it means, son or daughter, a child or children.

The words, "Who has created everything," signify that God is the Creator of both the matter and the soul. Matter and soul are not uncreated or co-existent with God as is mistakenly held by those who believe in the theory of the Transmigration of Souls. The clause, "and has given it its proper proportion," means that everything does its allotted task regularly, punctually and without fail and that there is a limit to the powers and functions or development of everything which it cannot defy or go beyond. These limitations point to one law that operates in the whole universe and hence to one Designer, Creator and Controller—a Creator Whose powers are limitless and Who has imposed these limits on all other things.

4. Yet "they have taken beside Him gods, ^bwho create nothing but are themselves created, and who have no power to harm or benefit themselves nor have they any power over death or life or resurrection."²⁶⁴³

5. And those who disbelieve say, 'It is naught but a lie which he has forged, "and other people have helped him with it." Indeed, they have committed a great injustice and a great falsehood."²⁶⁴⁴

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَا نَفْسٌ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٢٦٤٣﴾
وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا افْتِرَاءُ وَاعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٢٦٤٤﴾

^a 17 : 57; 18 : 16; 21 : 25. ^b 17 : 192; 16 : 21. ^c 16 : 104.

2643. Commentary :

Everything has to pass through three stages of development. The verse under comment mentions all these stages. The first stage is characterized by the absence of life. It is described as موت or the stage of lifelessness. The second stage is described as حياة or حياة بالقوة i.e. potential life, when a thing is endowed with the attribute and power of growth; and the third stage is reached when its powers come into actual play. This stage is known as حياة بالفعل or نشور i.e. actual life. God, the Creator of all life possesses complete and undisputed control over all these stages.

2644. Commentary :

The verse constitutes a delightful commentary on the miraculous character of the Qur'ān. The words, "other people have helped him with it," constitute an unequivocal admission on the part of disbelievers that no single person, not even the Holy Prophet could have produced such a marvellous Book and that a large party of men must have assisted him in preparing it.

The clause, "Indeed they have committed a great injustice and a great falsehood," refers to two charges of disbelievers against the Holy Prophet and answers them. The first charge is that the Holy Prophet has forged a lie. The answer that the verse gives to this charge is that it was unjust on their part to prefer such a charge against the Holy Prophet. He had lived among them a life-time before and they had unanimously borne testimony to his integrity and truthfulness. How could they now charge him with forgery? It was sheer injustice on their part to do so.

The second charge against him is that other people have helped him in producing the Qur'ān. In answer to this charge the verse says that it is an obvious untruth, since whosoever the Prophet's so-called helpers were, they must have held some beliefs and doctrines, but the Qur'ān refutes and demolishes all false beliefs and abrogates and improves upon others. How could any people be supposed to help him to produce a Book which had laid the axe at the root of those very beliefs and doctrines which they held so dear? So it is

6. And they say, *“These are fables of the ancients; and he has got them written down, and they are read out to him morning and evening.”*^{2644A}

وَقَالُوا أَأَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ
بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۝

7. Say, *“He Who knows every secret that is in the heavens and the earth has revealed it. Verily, He is Most Forgiving, Merciful.”*²⁶⁴⁵

قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝

^a8 : 32; 16 : 25; 68 : 16; 83 : 14. ^b6 : 4; 11 : 6; 67 : 14.

patent falsehood to say that the Holy Prophet had received help from any quarter in the preparation of the Qur’ān.

2644A. Important Words :

اكتتبها (got them written down) is derived from كتب كتاباً which means, he wrote. كتب كتاباً means, he wrote a book. اكتب كتاباً means, he wrote a book; he asked one to dictate it; he asked for a book or the like to be written for him; he collected it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

See next verse.

2645. Commentary :

This verse gives another very effective argument to break and demolish the allegations of the Holy Prophet’s detractors. “Do these enemies of truth have the hardihood to say,” the verse seems to argue, “that the Qur’ān is but a jumble of old stories and fables which are dictated to him morning and evening? It certainly

is not a collection of fables and stories but embodies great truths, noble teachings and mighty prophecies which no human brain can devise. The disbelievers will live to see those prophecies being fulfilled, because the Qur’ān has been revealed by the Great God Who knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth and because He being Merciful and Forgiving, took pity on corrupt humanity and provided in the Qur’ān the requisite remedies for all its moral and spiritual ills and maladies.” See also 16 : 104.

The verse further by implication holds out a challenge to the disbelievers that if they really think that the Qur’ān is the result of the Holy Prophet’s own effort, aided and helped in its production by a few other individuals, then let the whole world—men and jinn sit together and with their collective and concerted effort produce a book like the Qur’ān, and it declares with all the emphasis at its command that if they ever made such an attempt, they would certainly fail in their object. See also 17 : 89.

8. And they say, 'What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food, and walks in the streets? ^aWhy has not an angel been sent down to him that he might be a warner with him? ²⁶⁴⁶

وَقَالُوا مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا ۝

9. 'Or ^ba treasure should have been thrown down to him, or he should have had a garden to eat therefrom.' And the wrongdoers say, ^c"You follow none but a man bewitched." ²⁶⁴⁷

أَوْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ۝

10. ^dSee how they coin similitudes for thee! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way. ²⁶⁴⁸

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ۝

^a11 : 13; 15 : 8; 17 : 93. ^b 11 : 13; 17 : 94. ^c17 : 48. ^d17 : 49.

2646. Commentary :

This and the next verse contain another objection of disbelievers against the Holy Prophet, which the verses following them proceed to answer. The objection is: "The Holy Prophet is but an ordinary man. He eats and walks in the streets. If he was a Messenger of God, he should have been followed by an entourage of angels who would have borne testimony to his truth and should have warned his rejectors and deniers of the punishment that was in store for them."

2647. Commentary :

The objection which was begun in the preceding verse is continued in the verse under comment. "The Prophet," the disbelievers say, "should have possessed treasures of wealth which he should

have distributed among his followers. He should also have had other accessories of greatness in the form of gardens and fountains. But he has none of these things. He seems to be a bewitched, or, at best a self-deceived man, a man who lives in a world of his own imagination, in a fool's paradise."

2648. Commentary :

With this verse begins the refutation of the disbelievers' objections mentioned in the preceding verses. The verse purports to say that these people have a very poor concept of the real values of life, and have set up criteria of their own devising, to test the truth of Divine Messengers, with the result that instead of finding the right path they continue to grope in the darkness of doubt and disbelief.

- 2 11. Blessed is He Who, if He please, will assign to thee better than all that—
“gardens through which rivers flow,
and will *also* assign to thee palaces.”²⁶⁴⁹

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذَلِكَ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ
قُصُورًا ۝۱۱

12. Nay, they deny the Hour, and for those who deny the Hour We have prepared a blazing fire.²⁶⁵⁰

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ
بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ۝۱۲

417 : 92.

2649. Commentary :

The verse continues the theme of its predecessor. The words “exalted is He” signify that the disbelievers’ idea of what a Divine Prophet should be like, is far removed from reality and betrays their ignorance of the very object and purpose for which Prophets are raised. The Prophets are raised to lead men out of the darkness of doubt and disbelief into the light of certainty and spiritual bliss. The disbelievers want to see the Holy Prophet rolling and revelling in wealth. But such an idea is inconsistent with, and casts a reflection on, the Holiness of God.

The verse further signifies that although the self-devised criterion of disbelievers, namely, that to prove the truth of his mission the Holy Prophet must possess wealth, rank, gardens and palaces, has no weight or substance, yet in order to bring home to them the falsity of their position God will give the Holy Prophet and his followers more wealth and bigger and better gardens and palaces than those of the disbelievers’ demand. And was not this demand fully and completely fulfilled? Did not the camel-drivers of Arabia become the owners of the palaces and treasures of the Caesars

and the Chosroes and of the fertile plains and gardens of Syria and Iraq? The verse possesses a spiritual significance also. It means to say that worldly gardens wither and dry up for want of water and proper care, and treasures of wealth are used up and come to end, but the treasures of spiritual wealth which will be bestowed upon the Holy Prophet and his followers and the gardens of eternal bliss which will be given into their possession will be everlasting. The Garden of Islam itself will ever remain green. Heavenly Reformers will continue to arise from among Muslims who will make them understand and realise the great object for which man has been created. See next verse.

2650. Commentary :

The verse continuing the theme of the previous verse purports to say that whereas the believers are decreed to achieve eminence and glory, a dreadful punishment is in store for disbelievers. Their punishment is impending; nay it is at their very doors; but they do not see it and therefore refuse to believe it.

The word السَّاعَةِ (the Hour) in the verse signifies the complete triumph of the cause of truth and the failure and frustration of disbelief. In fact

13. When it sees them from a place far-off, 'they will hear its raging and roaring.'²⁶⁵¹

إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ يَبْعِدُ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا
وَزَفِيرًا ۝١٣

14. And when they are thrown into a narrow place thereof, 'chained together, they will pray there for destruction.'²⁶⁵²

وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْهُنَا إِلَهُ
ثُبُورًا ۝١٤

15. 'Pray not today for one destruction, but pray for many destructions.'

لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَاذْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا ۝١٥

16. Say, 'Is that better or the Garden of Eternity, which is 'promised to the righteous? It will be their *ultimate* reward and resort.'²⁶⁵³

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ
كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَاصِيًّا ۝١٦

^a11 : 107; 21 : 101; 67 : 8. ^b14 : 50. ^c21 : 104; 41 : 31.

the time of every Prophet has been called *الساعة* in the Qur'ān, as at that time the old order dies and from its ruins emerges a new one.

2651. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the punishment which the disbelievers will receive will be overwhelming and all-embracing and in order to add to the bitterness of their pain and sense of humiliation and to make it complete and thorough all their organs will be made to feel it. In the present verse two organs—that of sight and hearing are mentioned.

2652. Important Words :

ثُورًا (destruction) is infinitive-noun from *ثبر* which means, he perished; he suffered loss; he erred; he became lost. *ثبره* means, he drove him away, he repelled him; he disappointed or frustrated his hope or desire; he cursed him; he confined, restrained or withheld him; God

destroyed him with a destruction from which he could not rise. *ثبور* means, perdition; loss, going astray or becoming lost; woe; complete destruction, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In the preceding verse the organs of sight and hearing were mentioned as feeling the pain of Divine punishment. The present verse, besides referring to the organs of touch, expresses the extreme bitterness of the disbelievers' distress. When a man is in great distress he wishes that death should make a speedy end of him.

2653. Commentary :

In reply to the disbelievers' taunt that the Holy Prophet was quite an ordinary man and his followers were devoid of wealth and other material comforts (vv. 8-9), the Qur'ān had

17. ^aThey will have therein whatsoever they desire, abiding *therein for ever*. It is a promise from thy Lord, to be *always* prayed for.²⁶⁵⁴

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا
مَسْنُورًا ۝١٤

18. ^bAnd the day when He will assemble them and those whom they worship beside Allah, He will ask, 'Was it you who led astray these My servants, or did they *themselves* stray away from the path?'²⁶⁵⁵

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا
السَّبِيلَ ۝١٥

^a41 : 32. ^b10 : 29; 15 : 26 ; 34 : 41.

predicted that the Prophet and his followers would be given all these things in abundance (v. 11). In the present verse, however, reference is made to the fact that over and above these material benefits and comforts, Muslims will reside in Gardens of Eternity where they will bask in the sun of Divine love, the greatest of all blessings, and this blessing will know no diminution or end.

2654. Commentary :

The verse means to say that believers will earn "Gardens of Eternity" as a reward for the great sacrifices they will have made for the cause of truth and the life of piety and righteousness they will have led. They will, therefore, have the Gardens of Eternity as a matter of right. No conditions will attach to the promise about these "Gardens."

The words, "they will have therein whatever they desire", signify that the desires of believers will, in the next life, become identified with the will of God. So naturally all their desires will be satisfied. In this world also a believer attains to this high stage when he so merges his will in the Divine will that his will becomes the will of God Himself. In fact, in order to gain Paradise in this world and in the next the believer should attain to the high stage of self-effacement and of being at one with God.

2655. Commentary :

In contrast to the boons and blessings that the believers will enjoy, the disbelievers will be called to account for their polytheistic beliefs and evil practices. Even the false gods of disbelievers will have to explain how far the responsibility for the idolatrous beliefs of their so-called followers lay on them.

19. "They will say, 'Holy art Thou! It was not proper for us to take protectors other than Thee; but Thou didst bestow on them and their fathers the good things of *this life* until they forgot the admonition and became a ruined people.'²⁶⁵⁶

20. *Then We shall say to the idolaters*, 'Now have they given you the lie regarding what you said, so you cannot avert *the punishment*, neither *can you get help*. And whosoever among you does wrong, We shall make him taste a grievous punishment.'

21. And We never sent any Messengers before thee but surely^b they ate food and walked in the streets. And We make some of you a trial for others. Will you *then* be steadfast? And thy Lord is All-Seeing.²⁶⁵⁷

قَالُوا سُبْحَنَكَ مَا كَانَ يُنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ
دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى
نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا ①٩

فَقَدْ كَذَّبَكُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ لَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا
وَلَا نَصْرًا وَمَنْ يَظْلِمْ مِنْكُمْ نَذِقْهُ عَذَابًا
كَبِيرًا ②٠

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ
لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَشْرَبُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَجَعَلْنَا
بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ ۚ وَكَانَ
رَبُّكَ بِصِيرًا ②١

434 : 42. 21 : 9.

2656. Important Words :

بوراً (ruined) is derived from بار which means, he or it perished. They say بارت السوق i.e. the market became dull. بار العمل means, the work became null and void. بارت الارض means, the land was or became uncultivated. The Arabic saying بادوا وباروا means, they became extinct and perished. بور means, a bad and corrupt man or people; a ruined man or people; a man or people in a state of perdition (Lane & Aqrab).

2657. Commentary :

This verse again answers from another angle

the commonplace objection of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet lived like an ordinary man (v. 8). It means to say that the Holy Prophet's mission is not something novel. He is just like those Divine Messengers who have gone before him. He is an ordinary mortal like them and like them he eats and talks and moves about and, like the followers of those Prophets, his followers also will have to suffer for the cause they hold dear. If these things did not stand in the way of the earlier Prophets being accepted as Divine Messengers, why should they in his case, and why should new criteria be devised to test his truth?

- 3 22. "And those who look not for a meeting with Us say: 'Why are angels not sent down to us? Or why do we not see our Lord?' Surely, they are too proud of themselves and have greatly exceeded the bounds.²⁶⁵⁸

23. On the day ^bwhen they see the angels—there will be no good tidings on that day for the guilty; and they will say: 'Would that there were a strong barrier!'²⁶⁵⁹

24. And We shall turn to the work they did and We shall scatter it into particles of dust.²⁶⁶⁰

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ
عَلَيْنَا الْمَلِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا لَقَدْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا

فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٢﴾

يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ

وَيَقُولُونَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا ﴿٣٣﴾

وَقَدْ مَنَّآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً

مُنثُورًا ﴿٣٤﴾

^a10 : 8, 12. ^b6 : 9, 159.

2658. Commentary :

The disbelievers in their conceit and arrogance seem to be satisfied with nothing less than that angels should descend upon them or God Himself should speak to them to bear witness to the truth of the Prophet.

2659. Important Words :

حجرا محجورا (a strong barrier). حجر is derived from حَجَرَ (hajara) which means, heprevented, hindered, debarred, forbade or prohibited. They say لا حجر عنه i.e. there is no protection from him or it. حجر عليه means, the judge prohibited him from disposing of his property as he liked. حجر (hijrun) means, hindrance, barrier, protection, defence, prohibition, or prohibited, inviolable or sacred; any garden or walled garden; bosom; relationship that prohibits marriage; intellect or reason. هذا حجر عليك means, this is forbidden to thee. An Arab would use the words حجر محجورا when he is faced with a thing he

does not like, meaning "let it remain away from me so that I should not suffer from it" (Lane, Mufradāt & Aqrab). See also 6 : 139.

Commentary :

In reply to the first insolent demand the verse warns disbelievers that angels will certainly descend, but they will be angels of punishment and when they come, the disbelievers will hate the very sight of them and will pray that a strong barrier might be set up between them and the angels.

2660. Commentary :

The second foolish demand of disbelievers was that God Himself should speak to them, bearing witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet. This demand, the verse purports to say, will be met by all their works being totally rendered null and void and by their being destroyed and scattered into thin air like particles of dust.

25. The inmates of Heaven on that day will be better off as regards *their* abode, and better off in respect of *their* place of repose.²⁶⁶¹

أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا ۝٢٥

26. And the day ^awhen the heaven shall be rent asunder with the clouds, and the angels shall be sent down in large numbers—²⁶⁶²

وَيَوْمَ تَشَقُّ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا ۝٢٦

27. ^bThe True Kingdom on that day shall belong to the Gracious God; and it shall be a hard day for the disbelievers.²⁶⁶³

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ الرَّحْمَنُ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا ۝٢٧

“2 : 211. ^b 6 : 74 : 22 : 57.

2661. Commentary :

The verse signifies that whereas the work of disbelievers will be completely destroyed, the life of believers will be a life of perfect and perpetual calm and tranquillity. They will pass their days and nights in undisturbed composure and equanimity.

2662. Commentary :

The reference in the verse may be to the Battle of Badr when rain came as a welcome relief to Muslims, and angels descended in large numbers to help them. Elsewhere the Qur’ān says that in the battlefield of Badr as many as five thousand angels descended to attack disbelievers (3 : 125-126). It further says, “*God revealed to the angels, saying, ‘I am with you; so give firmness to those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Smite, then, the upper parts of their necks, and smite off all finger-tips’*” (8 : 13).

2663. Important Words :

عَسِيرًا (hard) is derived from عَسَرَ which means, it was or became difficult, hard, hard to be borne

or endured, hard to be done. حَاجَةٌ عَسِيرَةٌ means, a want difficult of attainment. يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ means, a day of difficulties; a hard, distressful or calamitous day; an unfortunate or unlucky day (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The day of Badr was indeed a most distressful day for disbelievers. It was on that day that the foundations of Islam were firmly laid and the Quraish had realized to their bitter mortification and discomfiture that it had come to stay. They had not the faintest idea that a small band of only 313 men, without adequate arms, ammunition or implements of war, will inflict a most crushing defeat on them and “the glory of Kedar will depart for ever.” It was on the battlefield of Badr that the great fighters and leaders of the Quraish were killed. That battle has therefore rightly been called one of the greatest battles in history. In that battle the fate of Islam—in fact, the fate of humanity itself—hung in the balance and the victory of Islam was the triumph of humanity.

28. Remember the day when the wrongdoer will bite his hands and will say, "O, would that I had taken the same way with the Messenger!"²⁶⁶⁴

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي أَخَذْتُ
مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ۝٢٨

29. 'O, woe is me! would that I had never taken such a one for a friend!²⁶⁶⁵

يُؤْيَلْتِي لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَخَذْ فَلَانًا خَلِيلًا ۝٢٩

30. 'He led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me.' And Satan always deserts man in the hour of need.²⁶⁶⁶

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي ۚ وَكَانَ
الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ۝٣٠

31. And the Messenger will say, 'O my Lord, my people indeed treated this Qur'ān as a discarded thing.'²⁶⁶⁷

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَرْبِّ إِنِّي قَوْمِي أَخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ كَهُجْرًا ۝٣١

^a 33 : 67; 67 : 11.

2664. Important Words :

ليتنى (would that I). ليت is a word denoting a wish (signifying would that...; I wish that...), generally relating to a thing that is impossible, rarely possible; governing the subject in the accusative case and the predicate in the nominative case. They say ليت زيدا ذاهب i.e. would that Zaid were going. Sometimes it is used as doubly transitive, putting both the subject and the predicate in the accusative case. They say ليت زيدا قائما i.e. would that Zaid were standing. It is used to give intensiveness to the meaning. ليتنى فعلت كذا وكذا means, would that I had done so and so (Lane).

Commentary :

This and the following two verses depict the feeling of humiliation and regret that overwhelmed the disbelievers on the day of Badr. These verses may have general application also.

2665. Important Words :

ويلتى (woe is me). ويل means, the befalling of

some calamity, misfortune or sorrow; punishment; perdition. The expression ويلك or ويلك is used as a warning for some impending misfortune or calamity (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 80.

2666. Important Words :

خذولا (one who always deserts) is derived from خذل. They say خذله or خذل عنه i.e. he abstained from, or neglected, aiding or assisting him; and held back from him; he left or forsook him or deserted him. خذول is the intensive form of خاذل and means, a great deserter or one who always deserts his friends (Lane & Mufradāt).

2667. Commentary :

The expression "my people" may apply to the Quraish of Mecca who were the Holy Prophet's people and were the Qur'ān's immediate addressees. More appropriately the words may apply to all Muslims, who have discarded the Qur'ān and have thrown it behind their backs. Perhaps never during the last 14 centuries the Qur'ān was so much neglected and ignored by the

32. "Thus did We make for every Prophet an enemy from among the sinners; and sufficient is thy Lord as a Guide and a Helper.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ وَكَفَىٰ
بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا ﴿٣٢﴾

33. ^bAnd those who disbelieve say 'Why was not the Qur'ān revealed to him all at once?' *We have revealed it thus* ^cthat We may strengthen thy heart therewith. And We have arranged it in the best form.²⁶⁶⁸

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً
وَاحِدَةً ۚ كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ
تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٣٣﴾

^a6 : 113. ^b17 : 107; 73 : 5. ^c11 : 121.

Muslims as it is today. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect: "A time will come upon my people when there will remain nothing of Islam but its name and of the Qur'ān but its words (Baihaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*). The present indeed is that time.

The emphasis on the word "this" in the expression "this Qur'ān" is full of pathos. The Holy Prophet is represented here as saying that his people have discarded such a blessed book as *this* Qur'ān in which there is light and guidance for them and which is God's greatest boon for mankind and which has been revealed to raise them to the highest pinnacles of moral and spiritual eminence.

2668. Important Words :

رتلناه ترتيلاً (We arranged it in the best form) is derived from رتل (ratala). رتل الشيء *i.e.* the thing was or became well arranged. رتل الكلام (rattala) means, he put together and arranged well the component parts of the speech or saying and made it distinct. ترتيل (inf. noun) in its original sense relates to the teeth, their being separate one from another. The addition

of the infinitive to the verb رتلنا is done in order to intensify the sense (Lane).

Commentary :

The Qur'ān was revealed piecemeal and at intervals. This was intended to serve two very useful purposes: (i) The interval between the revelation of different passages afforded the believers an opportunity to witness fulfilment of some of the prophecies made in the passages already revealed and thus their faith became strengthened and fortified. Further it was intended to answer the objections raised by disbelievers during the interval. (ii) When Muslims needed guidance on a particular occasion to meet a particular need, necessary and relevant verses were revealed. Besides, the revelation of the Qur'ān was spread over a period of 23 years in order to enable the Companions of the Holy Prophet to remember, learn and assimilate it. Moreover, the Qur'ān had anticipated one possible objection of disbelievers and its gradual revelation was intended to answer that objection. If it had been revealed at once and in the form of one complete book, the disbelievers

34. And they bring thee no similitude but We provide thee with the truth and an excellent explanation.²⁶⁶⁹

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ

تَفْسِيرًا ط

could have said that the Holy Prophet had got it all prepared from somebody. Thus its gradual revelation at different times, on different occasions and under vastly different conditions and circumstances, effectively smashed this possible objection. Last of all there was a prophecy of Prophet Isaiah that the last Divine Book would be revealed piecemeal and at intervals. The prophecy is as follows :

Whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast? For it is precept upon precept, ; precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line ; here a little and there a little : for with strange lips and another tongue will he speak to this people (Isaiah 28 ; 9—10).

The words, "We have arranged it in the best form," signify that whereas the Qur'ān was revealed gradually and piecemeal to meet the needs of changing circumstances, it did not remain a collection of disorderly fragments but was given a perfect order and arrangement by Divine revelation. It may be noted here that the present order of the Qur'ān is different from that in which it was originally revealed. It was revealed in an

order which suited the needs and requirements of its immediate addressees and was arranged, under Divine direction, in an order which suited the permanent needs of humanity at large. Since both these kinds of needs were different, the two orders should necessarily have been different. It is indeed an outstanding miracle of the Qur'ān that it was revealed in an order which was best suited for the needs of the period during which it was revealed and was arranged for permanent use in the order which was also best suited for humanity's lasting needs.

2669. Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers can bring forward no objection which has not been already answered in the Qur'ān and the answer has not been supported with excellent arguments contained in it. It is one of the distinctive features of the Qur'ān in which it stands unique among all revealed Books that whenever it makes a claim about the existence of God, the truth of Islam, or about its own Divine origin, or any other related religious subject, it itself gives the required arguments to prove and substantiate the claim and looks to no other agency for aid and assistance.

35. "Those who will be gathered on their faces unto Hell—^bthey will be the worst in plight and most astray from the *right* path."²⁶⁷⁰

الَّذِينَ يُحْشَرُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ
شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٥﴾

R. 4 36. We gave Moses the Book, and 'appointed with him his brother Aaron as *his* assistant."²⁶⁷¹

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ
وَزِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

37. And We said, ^a"Go both of you to the people who have rejected Our Signs;" then We destroyed them with overwhelming destruction.

فَقُلْنَا أَذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَدَمَرْنَهُمْ
تَدْمِيرًا ﴿٣٧﴾

38. And *as to* the people of Noah when they rejected the Messengers, We drowned them, and We made them a Sign for mankind. 'And We have prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers.

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ لَّمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
لِلنَّاسِ آيَةً ۖ وَاعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٣٨﴾

^a 17 : 98. ^b 5 : 61. ^c 20 : 30-33; 26 : 16; 28 : 35 ^d 20 : 44 ; 26 : 16 ; 28 : 35-36 ^e 18 : 30; 62 : 46.

2670. **Commentary :**

The words "will be gathered on their faces" may mean : (i) disbelievers will be gathered together and dragged on their faces into the fire of Hell; (ii) disbelievers will be gathered together when in a state of prostration with their faces on the ground and then dragged into Hell.

2671. **Commentary :**

The wages of sin is death. Opposition to God's Prophets has always resulted in discomfiture and

destruction of the enemies of truth. The present *Sūra* cites examples of some such Prophets whose people defied them and persecuted them and by their evil deeds drew upon themselves Divine wrath. Pride of place in this connection is given in this *Sūra* to Moses who was the greatest Prophet of Israel. He thought that the great mission with which he was entrusted was beyond his power. So he begged God to give him Aaron his brother, as his assistant to help him in his great work. Thus Aaron was a subordinate Prophet to Moses. See also 20 : 30-35.

39. And *We destroyed* ^aAd and Thamūd, and the People of the Well, and many a generation between them.²⁶⁷²

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّيْسِ وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ

كَثِيرًا ۝٣٩

40. And to each one We set forth *clear similitudes*; and each one did We utterly destroy.²⁶⁷³

وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيرًا ۝٤٠

41. And these (Meccans) must have visited ^bthe town whereon was rained an evil rain. Have they not then seen it ? Nay, they hope not to be raised *after death*.²⁶⁷⁴

وَلَقَدْ آتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي أَمْطَرْنَا مَطَرًا سَوِئًا

أَفَلَمْ يَكُونُوا يَرُونَهَا بَلْدًا كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ نُشُورًا ۝٤١

^a9 : 70; 38 : 13; 50 : 13-15. ^b7 : 85 ; 27 : 59.

2672. Important Words :

اصحاب الرس (People of the Well). They say رس البئر *i.e.* he dug the well. رس الميت means, he buried the dead body. رس بينهم means, he effected reconciliation between them. رس means, prelude, beginning; first symptoms of an illness or of love; mine; an old well ; according to some the name of a valley (Lane & Aqrab). اصحاب الرس, therefore signifies, the People of the Well ; the dwellers of a valley ; a people a few of whose signs and marks remain after these have been gradually obliterated.

Commentary :

According to some رس was a town in Yamāmah where one of the tribes of Thamūd resided. According to others, these people were so called because they threw their Prophet into a well. They were the remnants of Thamūd.

2673. Important Words :

تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيرًا (We utterly destroyed) is the transitive form of تَبَّرَ (tabira) which means, he became destroyed. تَبَّرَهُ (tabbara) means, he destroyed him; broke him into pieces annihilated him (Lane).

Commentary :

The truth is writ large on the face of history that opposition to God's Prophets has invariably led to the destruction of those who oppose them. There had never lived a Prophet who was not opposed and persecuted and opposition to whose mission did not result in the ruin of his persecutors. Yet such is the tragedy of human affairs that opponents of the Prophets of God never benefit from the fate of their predecessors. In their own time every people to whom a Divine Messenger was sent traversed the same road which had led to ruin those who had opposed their Prophets before them. At first the people of the Holy Prophet also opposed and persecuted him and did not benefit from the example of the opponents of the former Prophets and consequently a part of them met the fate of their counter parts.

2674. Commentary :

The reference in the word "the town" may be to Sodom, the town of Lot, which was situated on the way from Arabia to Syria.

نُشُور (to be raised) may also signify the hour of the triumph of Islam. The Quraish did not have the remotest idea that the cause of the Holy Prophet would or could ever triumph.

42. "And when they see thee, they only make a jest of thee: *What*, is this he whom Allah has sent as a Messenger?²⁶⁷⁵

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَخَذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا هَذَا الَّذِي
بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ۝٣٢

43. 'He indeed had well-nigh led us astray from our gods, had we not steadily adhered to them.' And they shall know, when they see the punishment, who is most astray from the *right* path.

إِنْ كَادَ لِيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ إِلَهِنَا لَوْلَا أَن صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا
وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ
سَبِيلًا ۝٣٣

44. 'Hast thou seen him who takes his own evil desire for his god? Couldst thou then be a guardian over him?'²⁶⁷⁶

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ
عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ۝٣٤

45. Dost thou think that most of them hear or understand? "They are but like cattle—nay, they are further astray from the path."²⁶⁷⁷

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِن
بُهِتَ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ۝٣٥

^a21 : 37. ^b45 : 24. ^c7 : 180.

2675. Commentary :

In view of the extreme weakness and poverty of the Holy Prophet's circumstances, the Quraish would jeeringly say, "Could not Allah find a better man to whom to entrust His mission?" The same objection of the Holy Prophet's opponents has been mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān in another form, viz., "why was not the Qur'ān revealed to a man of some importance in the two towns?" (43 : 32).

2676. Commentary :

It is not only the worship of idols of wood and stone and those in the form of human beings that is condemned here. In fact it is his own desires fancies and pre-conceived ideas, more than

anything else, that man adores and it is these things that stand in the way of his accepting the truth. Intellectually man may have advanced far enough so as not to bow before stones and stars but he has not outgrown the worship of his false ideals, prejudices and pre-conceived ideas. It is these idols that lie enthroned in man's heart whose worship is condemned here.

2677. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that when in spite of his being endowed with the faculties of intellect and hearing which should help him to recognize and realize truth, man refuses to make proper use of these God-given faculties to see light, and instead chooses to grope in darkness, he

5 46. Hast thou not seen ^ahow thy Lord lengthens the shade? And if He had pleased, He could have made it stationary. Then We make the sun a guide thereof.²⁶⁷⁸

الْمَرْتَرِ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَرَّ الظِّلُّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ﴿٢٦٧٨﴾

47. Then We draw it in towards Ourselves, an easy drawing in.²⁶⁷⁹

ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٢٦٧٩﴾

^a16 : 49.

comes down to the level of cattle, even lower than that, because cattle are not given the gift of discretion and discrimination while man is.

The verse also implies an allusion to the great reformation brought about by the Holy Prophet in the lives of his people. They were no better than animals and beasts. They worshipped images and held foolish and superstitious ideas. They gambled and drank and indulged in orgies of sexual excesses and depleted and destroyed their manhood by fighting for generations about trivialities. They had no idea of moral virtues or at best had a very low concept of them and did not know economics or statecraft. Such were the people among whom the Holy Prophet Muḥammad was raised and history bears witness to the fact that he wrought a wonderful reformation among them. From the dregs of humanity they rose to be its cream.

2678. Important Words :

دليل (guide) is derived from دل. They say دل عليه i.e. he directed him or rightly directed him or guided him to it. دليل, therefore, means, a director or a right director to that which is sought or desired; a guide; a thing by which one is rightly directed or guided i.e. an evidence, argument or a proof; a sign set up for the knowledge of a thing indicated (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

While the preceding few verses referred to the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet, the verse under comment speaks in figurative language of the rise, progress and power of Islam and illustrates this fact by drawing attention to a phenomenon of nature. When the sun is behind an object, its shadow lengthens. Similarly, when God is at the back of a people, their power and influence increase. The present Sūra was revealed at Mecca when Islam being yet in infancy, its very fate seemed to hang in the balance on account of the relentless persecution to which the weak and defenceless Muslims were subjected. In metaphorical language the verse seems to warn disbelievers that the weak state of Islam should not deceive them into thinking that they would succeed in exterminating it. God is at its back and therefore its shadow would continue to expand and extend till it would reach the ends of the earth and nations of the world will seek and find solace and comfort under it. "The sun" in the verse symbolises Islam or the Holy Prophet. For a fuller explanation of this verse see 16 : 49.

2679. Commentary :

The verse refers to the decline of Islam after it would have reached its zenith. While "shade" in the preceding verse symbolized power and influence, its "drawing in" in the present verse signifies decline and decay.

48. ^aAnd He it is Who has made the night a covering for you, and *Who has made sleep for rest,*²⁶⁸⁰ and has made the day a means of rise and progress.^{2680A}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا
وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾

49. ^bAnd He it is Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky,²⁶⁸¹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا ﴿٢٩﴾

^a 6-97 ; 78-11. ^b 7 : 59 ; 15 : 23 ; 24 : 44.

2680. Important Words :

سباتاً (rest) is derived from سبت which means, he rested; and was or became quiet, still or motionless. سبت (sabata) means, he was or became affected with the kind of sleep termed سبات, or he swooned. سبات primarily signifies rest and hence sleep or heavy sleep or sleep that is hardly perceptible, like a swoon; or the commencement of sleep in the head until it reaches the heart or the sleep of one who is sick, i.e. light sleep (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

'Night' in the verse represents the night of spiritual darkness, i.e. the period of spiritual darkness before the advent of a Prophet or a Divine Reformer; and 'day' symbolizes spiritual dawn when a Divine Reformer has already made his appearance. The verse purports to say that the night of spiritual darkness that had enveloped the world, particularly Arabia, before the advent of the Holy Prophet is about to end and the sun of spiritual light has already arisen to illumine the whole world.

2680A. Commentary :

The words, "has made the day a means of rise

and progress," may refer to the advent of a Divine Reformer when through him his followers rise from the sleep of spiritual sluggishness and make great progress.

2681. Commentary :

The verse continuing the theme of its predecessor speaks of the appearance of the Holy Prophet and likens his advent to the coming of rain. Just as in the physical world breezes herald the approach of rain, and twilight that of dawn, similarly in the spiritual world certain signs of spiritual awakening take place before the appearance of a Divine Reformer, and there is a certain revolt in the air against the existing corrupt state of affairs. Before the Holy Prophet was commissioned as a Divine Messenger, there had appeared a class of men who had declared their faith in the Unity of God and had discarded the worship of idols and had preached against it. They were known as *haneef*, i.e. those inclined to God. They acted as harbingers who gave the glad tidings that a great Messenger of God was about to appear.

"Rain" in the verse is spoken of as God's mercy and elsewhere in the Qur'ān the Holy Prophet has also been referred to as رحمة للعالمين i.e. mercy for all the worlds (21 : 108).

50. That We may thereby give life to a dead land, and give it for drink to Our creation—cattle and men in great numbers.²⁶⁸²

لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا
وَأَنَاسٍ كَثِيرًا ۝٥٠

51. And We have explained it to them in diverse ways that they may take heed, but most men would reject everything but disbelief.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا ۚ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ
النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ۝٥١

52. If We had pleased, We could have surely raised a Warner in every city.²⁶⁸³

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ تَذَكُّرًا ۝٥٢

53. So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them by means of it (the Qur'ān) a great striving.²⁶⁸⁴

فَلَا تُطِيعُوا الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ۝٥٣

2682. Commentary :

Arabia before the Holy Prophet's appearance was a spiritually dead land. Heavenly rain in the form of the Quranic revelation descended upon it and the whole country began to pulsate and vibrate with a new life and in turn imparted a new life to the world around it.

The words, "cattle and men" refer to two classes of men. Those who had become morally so depraved as apparently to be beyond redemption have been described as "cattle" and those who were spiritually somewhat better have been described as "men" in this verse. The former have already been referred to in v. 45 above. Both these classes of people drank deep at the fountain which the Holy Prophet caused to flow and by drinking of the Quranic elixir they got a new and everlasting life.

2683. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet's Message was for the whole world. The verse purports to say that God

could have raised a Messenger in every town but the Holy Prophet's time was not the time for raising tribal Prophets, because by the improvement in the means of communication nations of the world had become united into one people. The oneness of humanity required one Prophet for the whole of mankind and such was Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

2684. Commentary :

This verse throws a flood of light on the Islamic conception of Jihād which unfortunately has been much misunderstood, alike by the adversaries and the so-called followers of Islam. The great and real Jihād, according to this verse, is to preach the Message of the Qur'ān. Thus to strive for the propagation of Islam and the dissemination and diffusion of its teachings is the Jihād which the Muslims are enjoined always to carry on with unabated zeal. The Jihād with the sword which the Holy Prophet and early Muslims had to wage under their own peculiar

54. "And He it is Who has caused the two seas to flow, this palatable *and* sweet, and that saltish *and* bitter; and between them He has placed a barrier and a great partition."²⁶⁸⁵

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَ
هَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا
مَّحْجُورًا ﴿٥٤﴾

^a 35 : 13; 55 : 20, 21.

circumstances was a passing phase. Those who sought to destroy Islam by the sword themselves perished by the sword. Unless a people wage war against Muslims in order to exterminate Islam, no fight in which Muslims are engaged is called Jihād, but to fight in defence of one's hearth and home is also a very sacred duty and those who are killed in such a fight also die the death of martyrs, according to a saying of the Holy Prophet, viz., من قتل دون ماله *i.e.* he who is killed while defending his property and honour is a martyr (Bukhārī, *kutāb al-Maḏālim wa'l-Ghasb*).

It is worthy of note that this *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca when only a few persons of no high social standing had accepted Islam and even those few individuals were being severely persecuted and the fate of the new Faith itself was hanging in the balance. It was then out of the question even remotely to refer to Jihād with the sword. In fact, Jihād with the sword was only a side issue of the Prophet's activities. The Holy Prophet's real Jihād consisted in unceasing fight against the forces of darkness and he waged this Jihād with unabated zeal and undiminished vigour as long as he lived and this Jihād will continue to be relentlessly waged by his true followers till the end of time, not with the sword but with the Qur'ān. It is to this Jihād that the verse under comment refers and it is this

Jihād to which the Holy Prophet referred when on returning from an expedition he is reported to have said رجعنا من الجهاد الأصغر *i.e.* we have returned from the smaller Jihād to the greater Jihād (Radd al-Muḥtār). See also 22 : 40.

2685. Important Words :

مرج (caused to flow) means, he mixed two things together. مرج الشيئين بالشيء means, he mixed one thing with another. مرج الدابة means, he sent a beast to pasture wherever it would. They say مرج لسانه في أعراض الناس *i.e.* he let go his tongue in abusing people and backbiting them. مرج البحرين means, He (God) has mixed the two seas; He has let them flow freely (Lane & Aqrab).

فرت (sweet) is derived from فرات (*farata*). They say فرت الماء *i.e.* the water was or became sweet or very sweet. فرات applied to water means sweet, very sweet or of the sweetest kind that which subdues thirst by its excessive sweetness (Lane & Aqrab).

أجاج (bitter) is derived from أج. They say أجت النار *i.e.* the fire burned or burned brightly or fiercely. أج الماء means, the water was or became saltish or bitter. أجاج means, anything burning to the mouth whether saltish bitter or hot. ماء أجاج means, water that burns by its saltiness; or salt water or very bitter water like the water of

55. ^aAnd He it is Who has created man from water, and has made for him kindred by descent and kindred by marriage; and thy Lord is All-Powerful.²⁶⁸⁶

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا
وَصِهْرًا وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿٥٥﴾

^a 24-46 ; 32 : 9.

the sea, or water of which no use is made for drinking or for watering seed-product or other purposes; or very hot water (Lane, Aqrab & Muf-radāt). See also 21 : 97.

برزخ (partition) is a thing that intervenes between any two things; a bar; an obstruction; or a thing that separates two things *i.e.* a partition (Lane). See also 23 : 101.

Commentary :

Taking “two waters” in the verse to represent the true religion and the false one, the verse signifies that both Islam, the true religion, and other corrupted Faiths will continue to exist side by side, the former yielding sweet fruit and slaking the thirst of the spiritual way-farers and the latter barren and bitter, incapable of producing any good results.

The “two waters” may also signify the water of the sea and that of the river. The former is saltish and bitter to taste while the latter is drinkable and sweet. When the sweet water of the river flows into the sea and becomes mixed with its saltish water, it also becomes bitter. As long as these two waters keep themselves separate, they have different tastes. Similarly, when the teaching of a true religion becomes mixed up with the teachings of false religions, it loses its sweetness and usefulness. But God has so ordained that in spite of its close proximity to false religions Islam will never lose its sweet taste as God has taken upon Himself to protect and guard it (15 : 10). There is an unbridgeable

barrier between the two which keeps them apart. Or the word بحر meaning both river and sea, the verse may signify that under the system instituted by God rivers are fed by rain and snow and their water is always fresh, and though they fall into the sea, sea-water is always saltish and bitter. This is in effect an illustration of Divine guidance, which when it is constantly reinforced by fresh revelation remains fresh, sweet and life-giving, but when it becomes stale, it loses all value.

2686. Important Words :

نَسَبًا (kindred by descent). They say نَسَبَهُ *i.e.* he mentioned his (*i.e.* another person's) relationship (lineage or genealogy); he traced up his (*i.e.* another person's) lineage to his greatest ancestor; he asked him to tell him his lineage or genealogy. نَسَبَهُ إِلَى فُلَانٍ means, he referred or attributed his lineage or origin to such a one. نَسَبٌ means, origin, genealogy, pedigree, parentage with respect to father and mother or with respect to father only (Lane).

صِهْرٌ (kindred by marriage) is derived from صَهَرَ (sahara). They say صَهَرَ الشَّيْءُ *i.e.* he brought or drew the thing to him. صَهَرَ الْقَوْمَ أَوْ بِالْقَوْمِ أَوْ صَهَرَ فِيهِمْ أَوْ إِلَيْهِمْ means, he took to himself wife from among the people. أَصَهَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ or أَصَهَرَ بِهِمْ means, he connected himself with them; and became or made himself, an object of inviolable respect, by a covenant of mutual protection or by relationship or by marriage. صِهْرٌ means, relationship; nearness with respect to kindred; a

56. ^aAnd they worship beside Allah that which can do them no good nor harm them. And the disbeliever is a helper of *Satan* against his Lord.²⁶⁸⁷

57. ^bAnd We have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner.

58. ^cSay, 'I ask of you no recompense for it, save that whoso chooses may take a way unto his Lord,²⁶⁸⁸

59. ^dAnd trust thou in the Living One, Who dies not, and glorify *Him* with His praise. And sufficient is He as the Knower of the sins of His servants,

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ۖ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِ ظَهِيرًا ﴿٥٦﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٥٧﴾

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٥٨﴾

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَىٰ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا ﴿٥٩﴾

^a 6 : 72 ; 10 : 107 ; 21 : 67 ; 22 : 13. ^b 2 : 120 ; 5 : 20 ; 11 : 3 ; 35 : 25. ^c 38 : 87 ; 42 : 24.
^d 26 : 218 ; 27 : 80 ; 33 : 49.

kinsman or kinswoman of a man's wife; and of a woman's husband or the father or brother or other kinsman of a woman's husband and the father or brother or other kinsman of a man's wife; the sacred tie of relationship by marriage (Lane & Aqrab).

2687. Commentary :

The particle *على* meaning "against" the expression *كان الكافر على ربه ظهيراً* would signify that the disbeliever helps and aids those who fight and combat the cause of God—the true religion.

2688. Important Words :

إلا (save) is used to signify the sense of exception (*إستثناء*) and in Arabic *إستثناء* (exception) is of

two kinds: (i) *إستثناء متصل* i.e. an exception in which the thing excepted belongs to the same class or species to which the things from which as exception is sought to be made belong; (ii) *إستثناء منقطع* i.e. an exception in which the excepted thing belongs to a different class or species. *إلا* in the present verse is of the latter category and the meaning is, he who will take a way to his Lord, let him do so.

Commentary :

The verse provides yet another unassailable evidence that the Qur'ān gives complete and full freedom of conscience and choice of religious belief and practice.

60. "He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six periods, then He settled Himself *firmly* on the Throne. The Gracious God! Ask thou then concerning Him one who knows."²⁶⁸⁹

إِلَٰهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ فَسَلِّ بِهِ
خَيْرًا ۖ

61. And when it is said to them, 'Submit to the Gracious God,' they say, 'And who is the Gracious God? Shall we submit to whatever thou biddest us?' And it increases their aversion.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ
أَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا ۖ

62. Blessed is He ^bWho has made mansions in the heaven and has placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light.²⁶⁹⁰

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا
سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ۖ

^a7 : 55 ; 11 : 8 ; 32 : 5 ; 57 : 5 ^b 15 : 17 ; 85 : 2.

2689. Commentary :

For a detailed discussion about عرش see 10 : 4 & 20 : 6 and about ستة ايام see 10 : 4.

The expression فاسأل به خبيراً may mean: (1), "enquire then about it from One Who knows, i.e. God." or (2) "enquire then from Him Who knows it" or (3) "enquire concerning Him, i.e. God, from one who knows i.e. the Holy Prophet.

In view of these meanings the expression فاسأل به خبيراً would signify : (1) That if, by reflecting on the great and vast universe that lies spread before your eyes and the wonderful and absolutely flawless order and arrangement that pervades and permeates it, you are not convinced of the existence of a Designer and Creator Who must have created a parallel spiritual universe and must have made adequate provision for man's spiritual needs in it, as He

has made proper provision for his physical needs in the physical universe, then by prayer and supplication invoke His help that He, the Gracious God (الرحمن) may guide you to the right path and may disclose to you the truth of the Holy Prophet. (2) That because nobody has full knowledge about the creation of the heavens and the earth and about the nature and significance of "God's settling himself on the Throne," therefore seek His assistance for true understanding of this baffling enigma. (3) That as God's Grace (رحمانية) has found its fullest expression in the Holy Prophet, therefore, in order fully to understand its nature make a deep study of his life.

2690. Important Words :

برج (mansions) is the plural of برج (burj) which is derived from the verb برج (baraja) which means, it was or became apparent, manifest or conspicuous ; or it was or became

63. "And He it is Who has made the night and the day, each following the other, for *the benefit of* him who desires to remember, or desires to be grateful.²⁶⁹¹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنۢ أَرَادَ
أَنۡ يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا ﴿٢٦٩١﴾

64. And the servants of the Gracious God are ^bthose who walk on the earth modestly and ^cwhen the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace!'²⁶⁹²

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا
وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٢٦٩٢﴾

^a 36 : 38-41. ^b 17 : 38 ; 31 : 19. ^c 28 : 56.

high or elevated. برج (*burj*) means, a tower ; a sign of the Zodiac. بروج means, mansions (*i.e.* the courses or stages) of the moon or the stars, or constellations or asterisms (Lane). See also 15 : 17.

Commentary :

The verse constitutes an answer to the query of disbelievers mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., "And Who is the Gracious God ?" It means to say that the Gracious God is "He Who has made mansions in the heavens and has placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light." As the Divine attribute "Gracious" is intimately connected with the creation of the universe and the revelation of the Qur'ān and as the present verse points to the creation of the physical firmament and by implication to the spiritual firmament, it forms an appropriate answer to the impudent query of the disbelievers.

By alluding to the creation of the heavens, the sun, the moon and the stars that embellish and beautify them, the verse draws attention to the spiritual heaven which has its own sun, moon and stars. The Holy Prophet is the Sun of the spiritual firmament, the Promised Messiah is the Moon and the Holy Prophet's Companions and the learned and righteous

savants among his followers are the stars of this spiritual firmament. The Promised Messiah borrowed his spiritual light from the Holy Prophet. About his Companions the Holy Prophet is reported to have said : "My Companions are like stars, whomsoever of them you will follow, you will get right guidance" (Razīn).

2691. Commentary :

The simile begun in the preceding verse is continued in the present one. The verse purports to say that just as in the physical world day follows night, similarly in the spiritual realm when darkness enshrouds the world God raises a Reformer to give light to it.

The words "For him who desires to remember" signify that seekers after true knowledge may ponder over the perfect design that pervades the universe and thus may add to their knowledge and wisdom.

The clause "who desires to be grateful" means that men may also think over the numerous benefits they derive from the alternation of day and night and may be grateful to God for His manifold favours.

2692. Commentary :

With this verse begins a brief description of the great moral and spiritual revolution which

65. "And who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing,²⁶⁹³

66. And who say, 'Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell; for the punishment thereof is a most vehement torment.²⁶⁹⁴

67. 'It is indeed evil as a place of rest and as an abode;'

68. And those who, when they spend, ^bare neither extravagant nor niggardly but *adopt a moderate position* in the middle;²⁶⁹⁵

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ﴿٦٥﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ
إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾

^a41 : 39 ; 73 : 21. ^b6 : 142 ; 7; 32; 17 : 28.

that Sun of the spiritual firmament—the Holy Prophet—brought about among his people. From عباد الشيطان *i.e.* the sons of darkness, they became عباد الرحمن *i.e.* the servants of the Gracious and Beneficent God. The various qualities of the righteous servants of the Gracious God, referred to in this and the following verses, are the opposite counter-parts of the vices from which the people of the Holy Prophet particularly suffered. The Divine attribute الرحمن *i.e.* the Gracious, has been specially mentioned to show that the great revolution referred to above was brought about by the teaching of the Qur'ān whose revelation has a direct and intimate connection with this Divine attribute as hinted in the verse علم القرآن الرحمن *i.e.* the Gracious God Who taught the Qur'ān (55 : 2-3).

The verse also implies that the lives of God's servants also bear testimony to the fact that He is الرحمن (Gracious).

2693. Commentary :

History bears witness to the fact that early Muslims, even in the field of battle, while they

had actually remained engaged all day long in fighting, spent their nights in Prayer and the remembrance of God.

2694. Important Words :

غراما (most vehement torment) is derived from غرم which means, he paid or discharged a thing after it had become obligatory upon him. غرام الدين means, he discharged the debt. غرام means, a thing from which one is unable to free himself; a thing such as cleaves fast; lasting evil; perdition, persistent and such as cleaves fast; most vehement punishment or torment; hardship or difficulty and an affliction or a calamity or misfortune that befalls a man; eager desire (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

2695. Important Words :

لم يقتروا (nor spend niggardly). See 2 : 237 & 10 : 27.

قام (a moderate position) is derived from قام which means, he stood still in his place. قاومه means, it was equal or equivalent to it. قوام means, stature of a man; symmetry or justness

69. And those who call not on any other god along with Allah, "nor kill a person that Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit adultery (or fornication), and he who does that shall meet with the punishment of sin;²⁶⁹⁶

70. "Doubled to him will be the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein disgraced,^{2696A}

71. Except those who repent, and believe and do good deeds; for as to these, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful;²⁶⁹⁷

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ
النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا^{٦٩}

يُضْعَفُ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ
مُهَانًا^{٧٠}

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ
يَبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا^{٧١}

^{a6} : 152 : 17 : 33, 34. ^{b4} : 15 ^{c3} : 58 ; 6 : 49 ; 18 : 89 ; 19 : 61 ; 34 : 38.

of proportion; moderation; stay or support of a thing; subsistence of a man (Lane & Aqrab).

2696. Important Words :

أَثَامًا (punishment of sin) is infinitive noun from أَثَمَ which means, he fell into or committed a sin or crime; he did what was unlawful. أَثَامٌ means, the requital or recompense of a sin or crime or punishment thereof (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse deals with the three basic sins, i.e. idolatry, murder and adultery, the fountain-heads of individual depravity and social and sexual immorality. The Qur'ān has reverted to these three sins again and again.

2696A. Commentary :

تَوْبَةً (repentance) signifies repenting sincerely,

truly and honestly of past moral relapses with a firm resolve completely to shun all evil and do good deeds, and making amends for all wrongs done to people. In short تَوْبَةٌ consists in bringing about a complete change in one's life, turning one's back completely and thoroughly on one's past.

2697. Commentary :

So complete and thorough was the reformation brought about by the Holy Prophet in the lives of his followers that in the place of every sin and crime in which they indulged before Islam, they practised a corresponding virtue. This is how their evil deeds became converted into good ones. Those who were the very embodiment of vice became the models of virtue and righteousness.

72. ^aAnd those who repent and do good *deeds*, indeed turn to Allah with true repentance;²⁶⁹⁸

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٤٧﴾

73. And those who bear not false witness, and ^bwhen they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity;²⁶⁹⁹

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ﴿٤٨﴾

74. And those who, when they are reminded of the Signs of their Lord, fall not down thereat deaf and blind;²⁷⁰⁰

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا ﴿٤٩﴾

75. And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of *our* eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.'²⁷⁰¹

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلتَّقِيْنَ إِمَامًا ﴿٥٠﴾

^a5 : 40 ; 20 : 83 ; 28 : 68. ^b23 : 4 ; 28 : 56.

2698. Commentary :

True and sincere repentance must be followed by good works. There can be no true repentance without good works. This is why the word تاب *i.e.* repents, in the verse is followed by the expression عمل صالحًا *i.e.* and does good works.

2699. Important Words :

زور means, a lie ; a falsehood ; false witness; association of others with God ; a place where lies are told ; a place where people hear singing and entertain themselves with vain or frivolous diversion ; the assemblies of polytheists; strength, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In view of different meanings of the word زور given under "Important Words" above, the expression لا يشهدون الزور would mean : (a) they do not tell lies; or (b) they do not go to

places where people indulge in telling lies and in frivolous diversions, they do not sit in the company of liars; or (c) they do not associate false gods with Allah or do not attend such places where idolatry is practised; or (d) they do not bear false witness. In the last case the particle ب will be taken as understood before الزور.

2700. Commentary :

The words "they fall not deaf and dumb thereat," mean that they listen to the Signs of God attentively and with their eyes open. Their belief is based on conviction and certainty and not on mere hearsay.

2701. Commentary :

The word إمام meaning "leader" and "model" (2 : 125 & 15 : 80), the verse purports to say that a

76. It is such as will be rewarded a "high place in Paradise" because they were steadfast, and they will be received therein with greeting and peace,²⁷⁰²

أُولَٰئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا
تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا ۖ

77. Abiding therein. Excellent it is as a place of rest and as an abode.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسَنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ۖ

78. Say to the disbelievers: 'But for your prayer to Him my Lord would not care for you. You have indeed rejected the truth, and the punishment of your rejection will now cleave to you.'²⁷⁰³

قُلْ مَا يَعْبُؤُنَا بِكُمْ سِرِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ
كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ۖ

^{a34} : 38.

truly righteous man is not satisfied with only becoming righteous himself but aims at being a model and pattern for other righteous men to copy.

They say ما أعبأ به *i.e.* what shall I do with it or I do not care for, mind, heed or regard him, or I do not receive anything from him, with approbation, or I do not hold him to be of any weight or worth; or I do not esteem him (Lane & Muf-radāt).

2702. Important Words :

غرفة (highest place) is derived from غرف. They say غرف الشيء *i.e.* he cut or cut off the thing. غرفة means, balcony; chamber in the upper or uppermost storey (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that God has created man to serve a grand and noble object. If he turns his back on the object of his creation, he forfeits God's mercy and makes himself deserving of His displeasure. That sublime purpose of man's creation is referred to in vv. 51-57.

2703. Important Words :

يعبؤ (cares) is derived from عبأ which means, he packed up goods, put one upon the other.

CHAPTER 26

A L-S H U 'A R Ā'

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

A large majority of scholarly opinion regards this *Sūra* as of Meccan origin, but according to Muqātil vv. 198 and 225 belong to the Medinite period. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah, however, are of the opinion that vv. 225-228 only were revealed at Mecca. But this discrimination between certain verses as being of Meccan origin and certain others as having been revealed at Medina is only arbitrary. Generally, the Commentators base this haphazard distinction on the subject-matter of the verses in question which, according to them, deal with the conditions and circumstances that obtained in Mecca or Medina at the time when the relevant verse or verses were revealed or on some particular incident which had occurred in Mecca or Medina at that time. But thus to assign a particular verse or verses to the Meccan or Medinite period without giving sound and solid arguments or some incontestable historical evidence in support of such an assumption is at best hypothetical. Muqātil, for instance, holds v. 198 as having been revealed at Medina simply because it speaks of the "learned men of the Children of Israel" with whom the Muslims came in contact at Medina. If this fact alone were to be accepted as the criterion for determining as to whether a particular verse was revealed at Mecca or Medina, then both *Sūra* Maryam and *Sūra* Ṭāhā, which were definitely revealed at Mecca, will have to be regarded as belonging to the Medinite period because they deal with Christianity and the Israelite Prophets, and the Muslims came in contact with Jews and Christians at Medina. This method of determining the period of the revelation of the Quranic verses or *Sūrās* is not safe and is calculated to lead to wrong conclusions. The only safe guide in this respect is authentic historical evidence, the rest is mere conjecture and surmise.

From this *Sūra* a departure has been made in the subject-matter of the Qur'ān. From *Sūra* Yūnus the Qur'ān had directed its address principally to the Jews and the Christians. With the present Chapter the Muslims take the place of these two peoples and the form, nature and scope of the address have been changed, therefore, from this *Sūra* a change has also taken place in the مقطعات (abbreviated letters) placed at the head of the *Sūrās*. The present *Sūra* has been named الشعراء (poets) in order to drive home to Muslims the supreme lesson that success comes to a people only when their profession and practice go together and that empty talk like that of the poets leads nowhere.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

The preceding *Sūra* had ended on the note that it would be a great mistake to suppose that

God would allow the time-honoured system that had come into being through the great religions of the world to be destroyed. On the contrary, God had created man to demonstrate in his person His great attributes and in order that he should respond to the Divine Call. If man does not fulfil the great and sublime object of his creation, then there is no need or justification for him to exist and no need for God to feel any hesitancy in destroying him. In the *Sūra* under comment we are told that in his love and solicitude for humanity, the Holy Prophet feels grieved at this apprehended possibility and wishes and desires that man may be saved. This desire of the Holy Prophet no doubt proceeds from his great love for mankind. The destruction of man, however, does not apparently seem to be quite in harmony with the Divine design. The Divine design is that having been endowed with knowledge of, and insight into, the Heavenly plan man should be vouchsafed the opportunity to discover, with his own will and endeavour, the ways of the nearness of God and then should try to attain such nearness. But if he refuses to do so, he should suffer the consequences of his refusal. The *Sūra* then proceeds to tell us that if man had not been endowed with the discretion and ability to make a choice, he would have become a mere machine and an automaton and would not have been considered as a being made in the image of God. So man must act and conduct himself in harmony with the Divine scheme without which he cannot attain true and real salvation.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* particularly deals with the Divine attributes, *Laṭīf* (Benignant), *Samīʿ* (Hearing), *Malik* (King) and *Rahīm* (Merciful), and gives sound and solid arguments and reasons to prove that God is Holy, He hears the prayers of His creatures, He is Merciful and He is the King and Ruler of the whole universe. It proceeds to say that the Qurʾān gives its own arguments and proofs and needs no extraneous help or support to substantiate and establish the truth of its claims and teachings. It is further stated that the Holy Prophet's grief at the refusal of disbelievers to accept the Divine message will be of no avail to them because it is entirely their own choice whether to accept or reject the truth, and God will not compel them to accept it. As disbelievers have deliberately preferred disbelief to belief therefore they have become far removed from the realities of life and only mock and jeer at truth.

The *Sūra* then goes on to say that as for the fulfilment of human needs and requirements God has created pairs in all things in the physical world, it stands to reason that in the spiritual realm also He should have created their counterparts. This arrangement shows that God is Almighty and Merciful.

Next, it gives in detail the story of Moses. How he was entrusted with his great mission and was commanded to go with his brother, Aaron, to Pharaoh to preach to him the Divine message and to ask him to let him take the Israelites out of Egypt, and how Pharaoh taunted him for being ungrateful as he had been brought up in his house, and how Moses turned the tables upon him by telling him that instead of taunting him with ingratitude he (Pharaoh) should have felt ashamed of himself for having unjustly held his (Moses's) people in bondage. It is further stated that having been utterly confounded by Moses's rejoinder, Pharaoh sought to change the subject and began to ask questions about the existence of God. But when Moses gave devastating answers to these questions also, Pharaoh threatened him with imprison-

ment. And when Moses showed him the Sign of the rod and of the white hand, no course was left open to him but to accuse him (Moses) of being a sorcerer and an adventurer who sought political leadership. In order to defeat Moses, as he thought, with his own weapons, Pharaoh summoned magicians from all over the land, but they were completely confounded and discomfited and came to believe in Moses there and then.

The *Sūra* then sheds further light on the activities of Moses, who in pursuance of Divine command succeeded in taking the Israelites out of Egypt, and we are told that having been severely mortified and enraged at the escape of the Israelites, Pharaoh followed them in hot pursuit with his mighty hosts, but the Israelites safely went ashore while Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the sea. Then to illustrate that truth always triumphs in the long run and opposition to it comes to grief, the *Sūra* gives instances of Prophets Abraham, Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu'aib. Abraham demonstrated to his people the folly and futility of idol-worship and invited them to the worship of Almighty God Who hears the prayers of His votaries and Who controls the universe, and makes provision for the physical needs of man and also provides spiritual guidance for him. He gives life and brings about death and in Him all hopes are centred. To this most sympathetic and solicitous harangue of Abraham, his people, after the manner of the opponents of former Prophets, returned the arrogant reply that on no account would they give up the religion of their forefathers. They rejected the Divine message and were punished, because it is the invariable law of God that the arrogant and the wicked disbelievers are punished for their rejection of truth.

Abraham's account is followed by that of Noah. Noah's people also rejected him on the ground that he sought to remove all social distinctions. He told them that true criterion to judge who was really high and noble and who was low and ignoble was good conduct and righteous deeds and not power, wealth and social status. His people, instead of listening to his Message, threatened him with violence and incurred the wrath of God. Noah was followed by Hūd and Ṣāliḥ. Both these Divine Prophets also tried hard to make their people realize that it was not material pomp and power but good morals and spiritual strength upon which really depended the life and strength of a people. But their people also turned a deaf ear to their preachings and opposed them and persecuted them and declared with boastful arrogance that they would not give their allegiance to men of no consequence. The inevitable result of their opposition was that Divine punishment descended upon them. The people of Lot and Shu'aib fared no better. The former indulged in unnatural moral vice and the latter were dishonest in their commercial dealings. They, too, refused to listen to their Prophets and ignored Divine warnings, and consequently were seized with Divine punishment.

Towards its end the *Sūra* reverts to the subject with which it had commenced, viz., that the Qur'ān is the revealed Word of God. It further says that in order to prove the truth of its claims and teachings the Qur'ān gives solid and sound arguments and adds that the Prophets of yore have testified to its truth and have made prophecies about it, and the learned men of Israel also are convinced in their heart of hearts of its truth because it fulfils prophecies which are contained in their Scriptures. Moreover, the Qur'ān has been revealed in the tongue of its immediate addressees, the Arabs. If it had been revealed in a foreign tongue, they would not have understood it. But now that

it has been revealed in their own tongue they cannot refuse to accept it on the pretext of its not having been revealed in their own tongue. It, however, seems clear that like the opponents of truth in the past they would not accept it, and by their persistent rejection would incur God's displeasure. They should realize that if the Holy Prophet is a true Messenger of God, they would not escape Divine punishment.

The disbelievers are then invited to ponder over the teachings of the Qur'ān and to see if such a noble and sublime teaching could have been the work of Satan or if the Holy Prophet could have produced it himself. The teachings of the Qur'ān bear a close resemblance to those of the old Scriptures, and satanic people evidently can have no access to the Source of these teachings. Satans descend only upon liars and sinners and upon those who forge lies and coin and copy falsehood. The poets derive inspiration from these votaries of falsehood and are in turn followed by men of low morals and of no fixed principles. The poets and their followers take delight in tall, meaningless talk, but do not act upon what they profess and preach. As against them the righteous servants of God preach truth and serve and suffer for their noble ideals and therefore triumph and prevail in the long run.

The *Sūra* closes with enjoining the Holy Prophet to continue to preach the Unity and Oneness of God, first of all to his own people and then to educate and train believers for the promotion and furtherance of the great cause of Islam. He is further enjoined not to have anything to do with disbelievers and to trust in the Almighty and Merciful God under Whose protection and fostering care he passes his days, Who keeps a constant watch over him and Who will very soon end the state of dispersion of Muslims and will bring them together in a place where they will live in peace and prosperity and will worship none but the One True God in perfect safety and security.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²⁷⁰⁴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Ṭā Sīn Mīm.²⁷⁰⁵

طسم ②

^aSee 1 : 1.

2704. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

2705. **Commentary :**

The مقطعات (abbreviated letters) طسم may stand for the three Divine attributes, viz., Benignant, All-Hearing and All-Knowing ; the letter ط representing the Divine attribute لطيف (Benignant), س representing سميع (All-Hearing) and م standing for عليم (All-Knowing). These مقطعات show that in the present and the following few *Sūrās*, which are similar and subordinate to the present *Sūra*, in subject-matter, light has been shed on the fact that God is humanity's Great Benefactor ; He is Kind and Compassionate to His servants ; He hears their prayers and supplications and knows the inmost secrets of their hearts and all their needs and requirements and fulfils them. They further show that light has also been thrown in these *Sūrās* on the laws and rules which regulate and govern the universe and thus demonstrate Divine Majesty, Dignity and Glory and that sound and solid arguments have been given to support and substantiate what the Qur'ān asserts and claims. These مقطعات give such a beautiful and complete picture of Divine attributes as no other revealed Scripture has done and by implication exhort a Muslim to assimilate and develop in his person these attributes because God has created man in His own image and to the extent to which he assimilates Divine attributes,

to that extent he rises morally and spiritually and becomes his Creator's manifestation.

The present and next two *Sūrās* form a special group known as the طسم (Ṭā Sīn Mīm) group. All these three *Sūrās* bear a very close resemblance to each other in their subject-matter and were revealed in the same period at Mecca. As all of them deal particularly with the life-story of Moses in some detail, therefore some Commentators of the Qur'ān have taken the abbreviated letters طسم as standing for Mount Sinai and Moses ; طور سيناء طس standing for (Mount Sinai) and موسى م for (Moses).

The fact that the present *Sūra* and 28th *Sūra* are prefixed with the abbreviated letters طسم and give a much more detailed account of the different phases of Moses's chequered life, coupled with the fact that the 27th *Sūra* has only طس placed in its beginning (the letter م having been significantly omitted) and makes only a very brief reference to him, lends additional weight to the inference that this letter stands for Moses.

It may also be added that the three Divine attributes Benignant, All-Hearing and All-Knowing have also a strong bearing on the life-story of Moses, related in some detail in these three *Sūrās*.

For a detailed explanation, however, of مقطعات (abbreviated letters) see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2.

3. ^aThese are verses of the clear Book.²⁷⁰⁶

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْبَيِّنِ ③

4. ^bHaply thou wilt grieve thyself to death because they believe not.²⁷⁰⁷

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ④

^a12 : 2 ; 15 : 2 ; 27 : 2 ; 28 : 3. ^b18 : 7.

2706. Important Words :

أَبَانَ (clear) is active participle from أَبَانَ which is derived from بَانَ which being intransitive means it (the thing) was or became clear, manifest, plain, etc. أَبَانَ is used both as transitive and intransitive. استَبَانَ الحق or أَبَانَ الحق (*haqqo*) means, the truth became apparent and أَبَانَ الحق (*haqqo*) means, he made the truth clear. مَبِين therefore means, (1) that which itself is clear and manifest; (2) that which makes other things clear and (3) that which cuts off one thing from another and renders it distinct and separate from it (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 169.

Commentary :

The word مَبِين as its meanings show, points to the following three salient features of the Qur'ān, viz., (1) that it not only states facts and makes prophecies and lays down laws and ordinances but also supports and substantiates what it says and claims by solid arguments and sound reasons; (2) that it is not only clear in itself but makes clear the obscurities and ambiguities that are to be found in previous revealed Scriptures; and (3) that all that is essential for the attainment of nearness to God and all that relates to the laws of the *Shari'at*, to ethics and to matters of belief has been made quite clear in it.

This is a quality which the Qur'ān possesses

to the entire exclusion of all other revealed Books. Other Scriptures are only مستبين (clear in themselves) but the Qur'ān is not only مستبين but is also مَبِين (makes clear the obscurities that are to be found in other Books). What adds to the beauty of the Qur'ān as كتاب مَبِين (clear and perspicuous Book) is that all its teachings are in perfect harmony with كتاب مَكُون (preserved Book) i.e., pure and unsullied nature.

2707. Important Words :

For باخِع see 18 : 7.

Commentary :

The verse speaks volumes for the Holy Prophet's concern and solicitude for the spiritual well-being of his people. His grief over their rejection of his Message and opposition to it had almost killed him. He knew that if his people did not desist from opposing him and did not give up their evil ways, Divine wrath would descend upon them. The realization of this fact lay very heavy upon his heart. God's Messengers and His Prophets are full of the milk of human kindness. They cry and weep and grieve for mankind. But such is human ingratitude that those very people for whom they feel so deeply persecute them and seek to kill them.

5. If We please, We can send down to them a Sign from the heaven, so that their necks will bow down before it.²⁷⁰⁸

إِنْ نَّشَأْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ آيَةً فَظَلَّتْ
أَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خُضُعِينَ ⑤

6. "And there comes not to them a new Reminder from the Gracious God, but they turn away from it."²⁷⁰⁹

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ مُحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا
كَانُوا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِينَ ⑥

7. ^bThey have, indeed, treated it as a lie but soon there will come to them the tidings of that at which they mocked.²⁷¹⁰

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا فَسَيَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ⑦

^a21 : 3, 43. ^b6 : 35; 22 : 43; 35 : 26; 40 : 6.

2708. Important Words :

اعناق (necks) is the plural of عنق ('unuqun) which is derived from عنق ('aniqa) which means, his neck became tall. عنق means, neck, a portion of good; the upper portion of an elevated tract of land; the leaders or chiefs of a people, a company or a large company of men. They say جاني عنق من الناس i.e. a party of men came to me. The word also means, the first part of everything. They say مات فلان في عنق الصيف i.e. such a one died in the beginning of summer. هم عنق اليك means, they are inclined and listening to thee or expecting thee (Lane & Aqrab). اعناق therefore means, (a) different parties ; (b) leaders; (c) those who are waiting for a Sign to come.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that the Holy Prophet's grief for his disbelieving people will not be in vain. If they do not cease opposing him, they will be visited with the Sign of punishment which will humiliate and debase their leaders. That great Sign was witnessed by the Quraish in the Battle of Badr when they suffered a most humiliating defeat at the hands of a

small number of poor and ill-equipped Muslims and when almost all their great leaders were killed. Again they witnessed it in the Fall of Mecca when the cause of Islam triumphed fully and completely and the Quraish saw that they had to seek pardon from one whom they had hunted out of his native city and upon whose head they had placed a heavy price.

2709. Commentary :

The word "new" means, "in a new form" or "with new details." In fact, all Divine Laws are similar in their fundamentals and basic teachings. It is only in details that they differ. Or a new Law is revealed in a changed form in order to suit the ideas, needs and requirements of the particular time in which it is revealed. Some Prophets come with a new Law, while others only serve the existing Law.

2710. Commentary :

The verse has an implied allusion to the Biblical prophecy, viz., "the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner" (Matt. 21 : 42).

8. "Have they not looked at the earth, how many of every noble species have We caused to grow therein.²⁷¹¹

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَمَا أَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ

كَرِيمٍ ⑧

9. In that there is a Sign indeed ; but most of these would not believe.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ⑨

10. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.²⁷¹²

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ⑩

1. 2 11. ^bAnd remember when thy Lord called Moses, saying, 'Go to the wrongdoing people—²⁷¹³

وَإِذْ نَادَى رَبُّكَ مُوسَى أَنْ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ⑪

12. 'The people of Pharaoh. Will they not fear God?'

قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ إِلَّا يَتَّقُونَ ⑫

^a 36 : 34-37.

^b 20 : 25 ; 79 : 17-18.

2711. Commentary :

Of all Divine Books it is the Qur'ān which declared this great scientific truth as far back as about 1400 years that all things have been created in pairs. The verse further implies that when in the physical world all things have been created in pairs, it stands to reason that in the spiritual world also things should be in pairs—a Moses or a Jesus should have his counterpart and the Mosaic Dispensation should also have its counterpart—the Islamic Dispensation.

2712. Commentary :

In the present *Sūra* brief accounts of several great Prophets of God have been given and the account of every Prophet has ended with the words, "Verily thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful." These words imply that the circumstances of the Holy Prophet will resemble those of the Prophets mentioned in this *Sūra*. He will go through the same trials and tribulations

through which they had to pass and will face the same tempests and temptations which those Prophets had to meet, but whereas the Mighty God seized and destroyed the enemies of those Prophets, in the case of the Holy Prophet the Mighty God will not only manifest His might and power in giving victory to the Holy Prophet and in making his cause triumph and prosper but will also show mercy to his people, inasmuch as only a small minority of them will be destroyed while an overwhelming majority will receive Divine forgiveness and mercy and in the end will accept his Message.

2713. Commentary :

The account of the seven great Prophets mentioned in the *Sūra* begins with the story of Moses, the greatest of all the Israelite Prophets and the like of the Holy Prophet, Muḥammad. As many as fifty eight verses have been devoted to him.

13. He said, 'My Lord, "I fear that they will treat me as a liar;

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ ١٣

14. 'And my breast is straitened and my tongue is not fluent; therefore, "send word to Aaron;"²⁷¹⁴

وَيُضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَى

هَارُونَ ١٤

15. "And they have a charge against me, so I fear that they will kill me."²⁷¹⁵

وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ ١٥

16. 'God said, "Not so, go then, both of you, with Our Signs; We are with you and We hear."²⁷¹⁶

قَالَ كَلَّا فَادْهَبَا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُسْتَعِينُونَ ١٦

^a20 : 46; 28 : 35. ^b20 : 28. ^c20 : 31; ^d28 : 34. ^e28 : 36.

2714. Important Words :

طلقت is derived from طلق. They say طلقت الناقة i.e. the she-camel was or became loosed from her bond. طلقت المرأة زوجها means, the woman was or became divorced or separated from her husband. انطلق لسانه means, his tongue was or became eloquent or chaste in speech or was or became free from impediment and hence eloquent or chaste in speech (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse suggests that Moses did not seem to feel that he was quite equal to the great task with which he was being entrusted. The responsibilities of prophethood are indeed very heavy. At the time of the first revelation the Holy Prophet, himself, felt overwhelmed with anxiety.

2715. Important Words :

For ذنب see 3 : 17. According to Imām Rāghib any error or fault which produces a harmful result and for which one is liable to account is ذنب. It may be deliberate or committed through inadvertence.

Commentary :

The words "they have a charge against me" show that the people of Pharaoh had charged Moses with the murder of an Egyptian, not that Moses was actually guilty of a deliberate murder.

The incident referred to here is mentioned in Exod. 2 : 11-15. In the Qur'ān it is referred to in 28 : 16-21, where it is stated that it was not intentional murder. Moses was defending an Israelite whom an Egyptian was beating and in the scuffle the latter happened to be killed.

The words "I fear that they may kill me," should not be understood to mean that Moses was afraid of death. He was afraid lest the Egyptians should kill him on the charge of his having killed an Egyptian before he should have delivered his message and have fulfilled his mission which was dearer to him than life itself.

2716. Important Words :

كَلَّا means, no ; by no means; on the contrary; by all means; at any rate; truly. The particle is also used to remonstrate with a

17. "So go to Pharaoh, and say, 'We are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds,'²⁷¹⁷

18. 'To tell thee to send the Children of Israel with us.'"

19. Pharaoh said, 'Did we not bring thee up among us as a child? And thou didst stay among us *many* years of thy life;

20. "And thou didst do thy deed which thou didst, and thou art of the ungrateful."²⁷¹⁸

فَأْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝١٧

أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۝١٨

قَالَ أَلَمْ نُزِدْكَ فِيْنَا وَلِيدًا ۖ أَوَلَيْسَتْ فِيْنَا مِنْ

عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ ۝١٩

وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلَتَكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝٢٠

^a20 : 41; 28 : 16.

person and to tell him that what he says is not correct, or it is used for rejecting the request of a person (Aqrab & Baqā).

Commentary :

In the preceding two verses Moses had made one request to God and one statement of fact. The request was that because he was not eloquent in speech the great task of conveying the Divine message to Pharaoh might be entrusted to his brother, Aaron. And he had reinforced this request by the statement that the people of Pharaoh had a charge of murder against him and on that plea they might kill him. The particle *كَلَّا* (by no means) may apply either to the request or to the statement of Moses. As applying to Moses's request it may signify that his request for the transfer of the great mission to Aaron could not be granted and as applying to the statement it may signify that the people of Pharaoh would not be able to lay hands on him. Or the particle may signify both things at the same time, viz., that Moses himself would have to carry the great mission though his brother would also be appointed as his assistant and that he should not fear being killed by the people of Pharaoh because they

would not be able to lay hands on him.

2717. Commentary :

The word *رَسُول* here is in the singular while the subject *إِنَّا* and the verbs used are in the dual number. In Arabic it is permissible sometimes to use singular predicate for a subject in the dual or plural number, as they say *هَٰذَانِ رَسُولِي* i.e. those two are my messengers and my agents, the words *رَسُول* and *كِلِيل* being in the singular. The Arabs also say *هَٰؤُلَاءِ رَسُولِي* i.e., those are my messengers (Bayān). Elsewhere in the Qur'ān (26 : 78) a similar construction has been used as *فَانْهَمُ عَدُوِّي* i.e. they are my enemies, the word *عَدُو* being in the singular but giving the sense of a plural.

2718. Commentary :

The reference in the verse seems to be to an Egyptian having been killed by Moses. Pharaoh regards himself and his people, the Egyptians, as the great benefactors of the Israelites and accuses Moses of gross ingratitude in having killed an Egyptian, his own and that of his people's benefactor. It seems impudent on Pharaoh's part to have called himself a benefactor of the Israelites whom he had kept in

21. *Moses* said, 'I did do it then, and I was *one* of the erring,'²⁷¹⁹

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ۖ

22. "So I fled from you when I feared you; then my Lord granted me *right* judgment and made me *one* of the Messengers."^{2719A}

فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا
وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۖ

23. 'And this favour *of bringing me up as a child* with which thou tauntest me, *dost thou put forward* against thy having enslaved the Children of Israel.'²⁷²⁰

وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبْدْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۖ

a 28 : 22.

bondage and had treated them worse than animals, exacting from them the hardest and most humiliating labour. It is to this impudence of Pharaoh that Moses drew his attention in the verse under comment.

2719. Important Words :

ضالين (the erring) is the plural of ضال which is active participle from ضل which means, he erred; he did not find the way; he was perplexed and did not know what to do; he was confounded or perplexed and unable to see his right course; he was lost; he was lost in love (Aqrab, Lane & Lisān).

Commentary :

The verse signifies that when the Israelite called Moses for help against the Egyptian, he did not know what to do, and being anxious to help the Israelite (28:16-21) gave the Egyptian a blow with his closed fist which caused his death. The death was accidental and not deliberate because ordinarily a blow with the fist does not cause the death of a person.

If ضالين be taken in the sense of 'being lost in love,' the verse would depict Moses as

saying that it was on account of his great love for his oppressed people that he came to the help of the Israelite and gave a blow to the Egyptian, which resulted in his death.

2719 A. Commentary :

By the words, "made me one of the Messengers," Moses means that the very fact that God has made him a Prophet is a proof that what he had done was not an intentional wrong but an unwitting act done on the spur of the moment.

2720. Commentary :

When Moses presented to Pharaoh the Divine message and called upon him to accept it, Pharaoh began to recount the supposed evil deeds of Moses and accused him of ingratitude for the manifold favours which, he said, he had done to his people. The present verse constitutes a crushing reply from Moses's mouth to Pharaoh's impudent remark. Moses is described as saying to Pharaoh that he should be ashamed of referring to any good that he thinks he had done to his people as he (Pharaoh) had kept them for generations under

24. Pharaoh said, ^a"And what is the Lord of the worlds?"²⁷²¹

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۖ

25. Moses said, ^b"The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between the two, if you would believe."²⁷²²

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ ۚ

26. Pharaoh said to those around him, 'Do you not hear?'²⁷²³

قَالَ لَيْسَ حَوْلَهُ آلَا تَسْتَبْعُونَ ۚ

27. Moses said, 'Your Lord, and the Lord of your fathers of yore.'²⁷²⁴

قَالَ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ

28. Pharaoh said, ^c"Most surely, this Messenger of yours who has been sent to you is a madman."²⁷²⁵

قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكَ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ ۚ

^a20 : 50. ^b44 : 8. ^c44 : 15.

the most debasing and degrading form of bondage which had killed in them all sense of dignity, initiative and ambition to rise to their full stature.

2721. Commentary :

Moses's reply to Pharaoh as mentioned in the preceding verse seemed utterly to have confounded him and he (Pharaoh) at once changed the subject, seeking to involve Moses in a metaphysical discussion about the existence and Person of the Divine Being and the nature of His attributes.

2722. Commentary :

The words 'Lord of the heavens and the earth' refer to the vastness of God's dominion in respect of space.

2723. Commentary :

The verse depicts Pharaoh as trying to incite his people against Moses by hinting that he was insulting their gods by ascribing the kingdom

of the heavens and earth to Allah as it were their own gods who held sway over all the universe.

2724. Commentary :

Without heeding Pharaoh's interruption mentioned in the previous verse Moses continues his argument. In the preceding verse he had referred to the vastness of God's dominion and control in respect of space. In this verse he refers to God's dominion in respect of time.

2725. Commentary :

The verse may mean that seeing that Moses, without paying any attention to his interruption and warning, had continued his arguments Pharaoh thought that he was not in full possession of his senses; or he thought that like a madman Moses would listen to nobody but would go on harping on his own theme; and he said this in so many words.

29. *Moses* said, "The Lord of the East and of the West, and of all that is between the two, if you did but understand."²⁷²⁶

قَالَ رَبُّ الشَّرْقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْقِلُونَ ٢٩

30. ^b*Pharaoh* said, 'If thou takest a god other than me, I will certainly put thee into prison.'²⁷²⁷

قَالَ لَنْ اتَّخَذْتَ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لَا جَعَلَكَ مِنَ
الْمَسْجُورِينَ ٣٠

31. *Moses* said, 'What, even though I bring thee something that is manifest!'²⁷²⁸

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُبِينٍ ٣١

32. ^c*Pharaoh* said, 'Bring it then, if thou speakest the truth.'

قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ٣٢

^a2 : 116 ; 55 : 18 ^b28 : 39. ^c7 : 107.

2726. Commentary :

With the words, 'Lord of the East and the West, *Moses* completes his argument about the undisputed lordship of God over the entire universe. These words refer to the vastness of God's kingdom in respect of directions and sides. They may also contain an effective hint to the falseness of the polytheistic beliefs of the Egyptians who worshipped the sun and therefore looked upon the East and the West as belonging to their own gods.

2727. Commentary :

Pharaoh's question contained in v. 24 above, viz., "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" was so ably and effectively answered by *Moses* that he did not know how to contradict him. At first he had recourse to interruptions in order to silence *Moses*. When these tactics failed in their purpose, he sought to divert the attention of the audience by playing upon their feelings of

patriotism and by making disparaging remarks concerning *Moses*. When this stratagem also failed, he resorted to giving open threats to *Moses*. Such invariably are the tactics used by those who feel that their case is weak. In fact, such tactics imply a confession of defeat on the part of the person who uses them.

The Egyptians were a nation of idol worshippers. They worshipped wood and stones, the sun and stars. They had their animal gods and human gods. Fire, water and other natural elements were also worshipped by them. Their gods were legion. It was, therefore, nothing strange on the part of *Pharaoh* also to lay claim to Divinity.

2728. Commentary :

Moses remains undaunted by threats of violence on the part of *Pharaoh* and seems prepared to advance more arguments in support of his claims if *Pharaoh* would only listen to him.

33. So he threw down his rod, and behold! ^ait was a serpent plainly visible.²⁷²⁹

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. ^aAnd he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white for the beholders.

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

R. 3 35. ^aPharaoh said to the chiefs around him, 'This is surely a skilful magician;

قَالَ لِلْمَلَاحِظِينَ إِنَّ هَذَا السَّحَرُ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. ^d'He seeks to turn you out of your land by his magic. Now what do you advise?'²⁷³⁰

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِ ۖ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

^a7 : 108.

^b7 : 109; 20 : 24.

^c7 : 110.

^d7 : 111; 20 : 58, 64.

2729. Commentary :

The miracles referred to in this and the following verse have been fully discussed in 7:107-108, and 20 : 21-23. Briefly, it may be stated here that the rod of Moses did not actually turn into a serpent. It appeared to the audience as if it were a serpent. In fact, it was a vision of Moses in which the whole assembly were made to join. Now a rod in a vision symbolizes a community and the serpent an enemy. Thus by the miraculous happening Moses was made to understand that if he cast away his people from him, they would become veritable serpents but if he kept them under his fostering care they would grow into a strong and well-knit community and would not only become men of light and learning themselves but would also impart these things to others.

Moses's white hand seemed also to signify

that the great spiritual Movement he had founded would one day enlighten the world with the Divine light and that his teaching would radiate and his people would undergo a complete transformation, and would become a community of highly righteous men. In fact, noble and righteous servants of God to whom He entrusts the task of bringing about a great change in the lives of his people become invested with a Divine light which sometimes takes a material form and is seen by other people also.

2730. Commentary :

Pharaoh here plays upon the patriotic feelings of the Egyptians and thus seeks to incite them against Moses by telling them that he desires to take possession of their land. The enemies of truth stoop to any kind of lie to achieve their ends.

37. "They said, 'Put him off and his brother *awhile* and send into the cities summoners,

38. ^b"Who should bring thee every skilful sorcerer."²⁷³¹

39. "So the magicians were assembled together at the appointed time on a fixed day.

40. ^d"And it was said to the people, 'Will you *also* gather together,

41. 'So that we may follow the magicians if they are the winners?'

42. And, when the magicians came, they said to Pharaoh, 'Shall we have a reward if we are the winners?'²⁷³²

43. 'He said, 'Yes, and surely then you will be among those who are near *my person*."²⁷³³

44. ^fMoses said to them, 'Now throw ye what you have to throw.'

قَالُوا ارْجِهْ وَآخَاهُ وَابْعَثْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

يَا تُوَكِّلُ كُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّجْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

لَعَلَّآ نَشِيعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَإِنَّا لَنَّا لِأَجْرٍ

إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَبِثَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

قَالَ لَهُمُ مُوسَى الْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُّلقُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

^a7 : 112; 10 : 80. ^b7 : 113 ^c7 : 113; 20 : 59. ^d20 : 60. ^e7 : 115. ^f7:117, 10 : 81; 20 : 67.

2731. Important Words :

ساحر is the intensive form of ساحر (plural ساحرون and سحره) and means a great sorcerer. With the addition of عليم (expert) the sense has been very much intensified. سحر (Sihr) means, magic, sorcery, spell; magic-charms; anything charming, captivating, fascinating; deceiving, deluding (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 110, 117 & 10 : 77.

2732. Commentary :

The words, 'shall we have a reward if we are

the winners,' show (1) that the magicians were professional sorcerers whose standard of morality was very low; and (2) that they were not sure of their success.

2733. Commentary :

Pharaoh seems to have been overwhelmed with the arguments advanced by Moses and seeks to defeat him at any cost. He offers the magicians a very tempting bait. They seem to have been offered very high posts at the royal court.

45. So they threw down their ropes and their rods, and said, 'By Pharaoh's honour, it is we who will surely win.'²⁷³⁴

فَالْتَقُوا جِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ

إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

46. "Then Moses threw down his rod, and lo! it swallowed up *all* that which they had fabricated."²⁷³⁵

فَأَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. ^bThereupon the magicians were impelled to fall down prostrate.²⁷³⁶

فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَجْدِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. They said, 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds,

قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

49. "The Lord of Moses, and of Aaron."²⁷³⁷

رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a7 : 118; 20 : 70.

^b7 : 121; 20 : 71.

^c7 : 123; 20 : 71.

2734. Important Words :

عِزَّة (honour) means, honour; high position; might and power; pride; consciousness of one's high position and rank (Lane & Aqrab).

2735. Important Words :

يَأْفِكُونَ (fabricated) is derived from أَفَكَ which means, he hid; he uttered a falsehood; he said what was not true; *i.e.* he fabricated or invented a lie. أَفَّاكَ means, a great or habitual liar (Lane & Aqrab).

For تَلْقَفُ see 7 : 118.

[Commentary :

The verse makes it quite clear that the rod of Moses did not swallow the rods and ropes of the magicians but it "swallowed up all that which they had fabricated," *i.e.* it utterly destroyed the imposture, forgery and deception of the magicians. Moreover, it was not the rod changed into a serpent which undid the

magic of the magicians but it was the rod itself which exposed the deception they had wrought on the spectators by breaking to pieces the things which under the influence of the magic the spectators had taken for real serpents.

2736. Commentary :

The verse contains a beautiful illustration of the invincible power of truth and that of falsehood having feet of clay. The magicians were won over to truth at the spot. Those who had come to scoff remained to pray.

2737. Commentary :

The words "the Lord of Moses and of Aaron" being case in apposition to the words, "the Lord of all the worlds" in the preceding verse, signify that the magicians had realized that the Lord of Moses and Aaron was the Lord of the worlds *i.e.* He was on their side. So they at once believed in Him.

50. ^aPharaoh said, 'You have believed in him before I gave you leave? He is surely your chief who has taught you magic. But you shall know the consequences thereof. I will most surely cut off your hands and your feet on alternate sides, and I will most surely crucify you all.'²⁷³⁸

قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ اِنَّهٗ لَكَبِيْرُكُمْ
الَّذِى عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ هٗ لَا قُطْعَنَ
اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّ لَا وَصْلَبَتَكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ۝٥٠

51. ^bThey said, 'There is no harm; to our Lord shall we return.'²⁷³⁹

قَالُوْا لَا ضَيْرُ اِنَّا اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ۝٥١

52. ^c'We do hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins, since ^dwe are the first among the believers.'

اِنَّا نَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا خَطِيْئَتَا اَنْ كُنَّا اَوَّلَ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٥٢

4 53. ^eAnd We revealed to Moses, saying, 'Take away My servants by night, you will surely be pursued.'

وَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلٰى مُّوْسٰى اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِىْ اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ۝٥٣

54. And Pharaoh sent summoners into the cities, saying,

فَاَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنُ فِى الْمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ۝٥٤

^{a7} : 124-125 ; 20 : 72.

^{b7} : 126 ; 20 : 73.

^{c5} : 85.

^{d7} : 127 ; 20 : 74.

^{e10} : 91 ; 20 : 78 ; 44 : 24.

2738. Commentary :

Death by crucifixion by itself is a very painful death, but the punishment of the cutting of hands and feet has been added to make it more painful.

2739. Important Words :

ضَيْر is infinitive noun from ضَار (aor يَضِيْر). They say ضَارَهٗ i.e. it (a thing) harmed, injured, hurt or damaged him. هٰذَا بِمَا لَا يَضِيْرُكَ means, this is of the things that will not harm thee. لَا ضَيْرَ عَلَيْكَ means, no harm shall befall thee (Lane).

Commentary :

Pharaoh's threat of inflicting violent death

upon the magicians leaves them unrepentant and unafraid. On the contrary, the words of the verse seem to imply on their part a challenge to Pharaoh to do his worst. They do not care a hang for his threats. The sooner they die, they appear to be saying, the quicker will they meet their Lord; and the more painful their death, the greater will be their reward in the Hereafter. Faith indeed works wonders. The erstwhile professional magicians, who, a few minutes ago, were prepared to resort to any trick and subterfuge for the sake of filthy lucre had come to acquire a faith that could move mountains and defy death.

55. 'These are a small party.'²⁷⁴⁰ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءَ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ ۝
56. 'And they have offended us';²⁷⁴¹ وَأَنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَآظُونَ ۝
57. 'And we are a multitude *fully prepared and vigilant*.'²⁷⁴² وَأَنَّا لَجَبِيْعٌ حَذَرُونَ ۝
58. 'So We turned them out of gardens, and springs, فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۝
59. And treasures, and an abode of honour. وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ۝
60. ^bThus *indeed it was*; and We gave them as heritage to the Children of Israel—²⁷⁴³ كَذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ ۝

a44 : 26-28

b44 : 29.

2740. Important Words :

شِرْذِمَةٌ means, a party or company of men or people; or a small company or small number of men; a piece or portion. ثِيَابٍ شِرَازِمٍ means, old and worn out garments (Lane).

Commentary :

Pharaoh here refers with extreme contempt to the smallness of number of the Israelites and to the poverty of their circumstances.

2741. Important Words :

غَاظُوا (have offended) is the plural of غَاظَ which is derived from غَاظَ i.e. he or it affected him with anger, wrath or rage or it angered or enraged him. غَيْظٌ means, anger, wrath (Lane).

Commentary :

The appearance of a Divine Prophet among a people is a sure guarantee of their great and bright future if they accept his Message and follow his lead. The Prophet gives them a new life and creates in them a new hope and confi-

dence which change their whole outlook on life and their attitude towards their exploiters. After the advent of Moses, Pharaoh must have felt a great change in the Israelites and this must have cut him to the quick.

2742. Important Words :

حَاذَرُونَ (prepared and vigilant) is the plural of حَاذَرَ which is active participle from حَاذَرَ which means, he was cautious, wary or vigilant; he was on his guard. حَاذَرُونَ means, in a state of preparation; or fully equipped with arms; or cautious or vigilant; fearful (Lane & Aqrab).

2743. Commentary :

The word كَذَٰلِكَ means, it always so happens i.e. whenever a Prophet is raised among a people God bestows His favours and gifts upon those who accept his Message and punishes those who reject it. The pronoun هَا (them) in the expression أَوْرَثْنَاهَا (We gave them as heritage) does not mean that the springs and

61. "And they pursued and overtook them at sunrise.

فَاتَّبَعُوهُمْ مُشْرِقِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, 'We are surely overtaken.'²⁷⁴⁴

فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَ الْجَمْعَانِ قَالَ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَكُذْرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. 'Nay, *speaking thus!*' said he, 'My Lord is with me. He will direct me to safety.'²⁷⁴⁵

قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. ^bThen We revealed to Moses, saying, 'Strike the sea with thy rod.' Thereupon it parted, and every part looked like a huge mountain.'²⁷⁴⁶

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ
فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فَرَقٍ كَالظُّورِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٦٤﴾

^a10 : 91; 20 : 79; 44 : 24. ^c20 : 78.

gardens and treasures of Pharaoh and the Egyptians were given over to the Israelites. The latter had left Egypt for Canaan, the land of promise which "flowed with milk and honey." It is there that the Israelites were given these things. The pronoun, therefore, refers to the springs, gardens and treasures which resembled those that they had left behind in Egypt. In fact, Palestine quite resembles Egypt in the abundance of its gardens and springs.

2744. Commentary :

This verse shows that the companions of Moses were generally men of very weak faith. This is also clear from several other verses of the Qur'ān. See 5 : 22-23; 7 : 149; 20 : 87-92, etc.

2745. Commentary :

The verse throws a flood of light on the invincible faith that the Prophets have in God. The Israelites were between the devil and the deep sea. The sea was before them and the mighty hosts of Pharaoh were coming from behind in hot pursuit. Complete destruction stared them in the face, and in utter despair they cried "We are surely overtaken." But

Moses's faith in his Lord was as strong as ever, nay it shone forth with greater effulgence in the face of the extreme peril. To the cry of despair of his companions Moses replied, most emphatically, and in words expressive of complete confidence and trust in God. "We shall never be overtaken," he said, "My Lord is with me." This is how God's Elect stand firm and unshaken like a rock in the midst of severest trials. God purposely makes them pass through hard ordeals to show to the world the invincibility of their trust in God and His own regard for them. They emerge from these ordeals triumphant. This has happened in the time of every Prophet of God. Its brightest example is to be seen in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

2746. Important Words :

طود (mountain) is derived from طاد which means, it was or became firm or steadfast. طود means, a mountain or a great mountain rising high into the sky, an elevated or overlooking tract of land (Lane & Aqrab).

فرق (part) is derived from فرق (faraqa) and means, a piece or portion that is split or separated

65. And We made others approach that place.^{2746A}

وَأَزَلَفْنَا ثَمَّ الْآخَرِينَ ١٥

66. "And We saved Moses and those who were with him.

وَأَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَى وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ١٦

67. ^bThen We drowned the others.

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ١٧

68. In this, verily there is a Sign; but most of these would not believe.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّمَنْ هُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ١٨

69. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

يَعْلَمُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ١٩

R. 5 70. And recite unto them the story of Abraham.²⁷⁴⁷

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ٢٠

^a20 : 81; 44 : 31-32. ^b2 : 51; 7 : 137; 17 : 104; 20 : 79.

from a thing; a great flock or herd of sheep or goats only; a set of boys; a mountain; a wave, billow or surge (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

For a more detailed discussion as to how the Israelites passed safely through the sea and how Pharaoh with his hosts was drowned, see 20:78.

The idea embodied in the words اضرب بعصاك has been expressed elsewhere (20:78) in the words فاضرب لهم طريقا في البحر يسا i.e. "make for them a dry path in the sea." God miraculously so arranged that when the Israelites were crossing the sea it was the time of the low tide and the water of the sea had receded, leaving a dry path for them to pass. But when the Egyptians following them reached the middle of the sea, the high tide returned and the rising water quickly engulfed them.

The words كل فرق may either refer to the two parties of the Egyptians and the Israelites or to the several parties in which the Egyptians might

have become divided while they were crossing the sea; or they may refer to each wave of the sea because when the water was receding it looked like a huge mound.

2746A. Important Words :

ثَمَّ (that place). They say ثَمَّه i.e. he repaired to it. ثَمَّ means, there; that place; thither; yonder. This word is generally used to denote a place which is remote while هُنَا denotes a place which is near (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 116.

2747. Commentary :

The account of Moses is followed by that of the great Patriarch Abraham in this verse. Moses being the Holy Prophet's counter-part, his account formed the principal subject of the present *Sūra*. Abraham's account stood second in importance to that of Moses because he was the Holy Prophet's great ancestor and the progenitor of the two Houses, the House of Ishmael and the House of Israel.

71. ^aWhen he said to his father and his people, 'What do you worship?'²⁷⁴⁸

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ^{٤١}

72. ^bThey said, 'We worship idols, and we continue to be devoted to them.'

قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عِظِينَ^{٤٢}

73. ^cHe said, 'Can they listen to you when you call on them?'²⁷⁴⁹

قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمُ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ^{٤٣}

74. 'Or do you good or harm you?'

أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمُ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ^{٤٤}

75. ^dThey said, 'Nay, but we found our fathers doing likewise.'²⁷⁵⁰

قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ^{٤٥}

76. ^eHe said, 'What think ye of that which you have been worshipping—'

قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ^{٤٦}

77. 'You and your fathers before you.'

أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ^{٤٧}

^a6 : 75; 19 : 43; 21 : 53; 37 : 86-87. ^b21 : 54. ^cSee 26 : 71. ^d21 : 54; 43 : 24. ^e21 : 67; 37 : 86-87.

2748. Commentary :

Throughout the Qur'an the name of Abraham has been associated with a vigorous campaign against idolatry. He seems to be the first uncompromising iconoclast of whose activities history has kept a record.

He preached against idolatry, even at the peril of his life and preached the Unity of God to his father, to his people and to the king of his country.

2749. Commentary :

In this and the following verse Abraham gives two sound arguments against idolatry; (1) that the idols do not hear and answer the prayers of their votaries; and (2) that they possess no power to benefit or harm anyone. Of what use is that deity who does not possess these two basic attributes? Islam claims and enjoys this superiority over all other religions that the God

Whom it presents to the world is a living God Who answers the prayers of His servants and speaks to them. It is only in Islam that its righteous followers hear the sweet voice of God. This greatest Divine boon is now denied to the followers of all other Faiths. This fact alone constitutes an unanswerable evidence of Islam being a living faith and other religions being devoid of life.

2750. Commentary :

The verse refers to a stock argument of the deniers of all enlightened and progressive ideas. They find it convenient to take refuge behind the foolish plea that their forefathers were not less wise and therefore they would not depart from the precedent set by them. The habit of unthinkingly and thoughtlessly sticking to old ideas and practices has proved the spiritual undoing of many a people.

78. 'They are *all* enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds';²⁷⁵¹

79. 'Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me';²⁷⁵²

80. 'And Who gives me food and gives me drink;

81. 'And when I am ill, it is He Who restores me to health';²⁷⁵³

82. 'And Who will cause me to die, and then bring me to life *again*';²⁷⁵⁴

فَاتَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٣١﴾

وَالَّذِي يُبَيِّتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٣٢﴾

2751. Commentary :

In this verse Abraham, quite convincingly, exposes the futility of the idolatrous ideas and practices of his people. He tells them that he is carrying on a vigorous campaign against idols and because of it they must be his enemies. So he challenges them to do their worst against him. In this way Abraham sought to bring home to his people the utter helplessness of their idols and the futility of worshipping them.

2752. Commentary :

As against the powerlessness of the idols Abraham, from this verse, begins to recount the great powers and attributes of God.

2753. Commentary :

In this verse Abraham attributes all malady and ailment to himself and all remedy and cure to God. The verse is quite in keeping with another verse of the Qur'ān (4 : 80) wherein it is stated that whatever good comes to a man is from God and whatever misfortune befalls him is from his own self. In fact, every misfortune

that befalls a man is the result of the contravention by him of a particular law of nature, so he himself is responsible for it. On the other hand, God being the Fountain-head of all grace, all good should be regarded as emanating from Him.

2754. Commentary :

While Abraham ascribes disease and ailment to himself, he attributes death to God which shows that, according to him death was not, and really is not, an evil thing to be dreaded or shunned. In fact, death is the natural and necessary end of all life and like life it is a great Divine boon. Without death there would have been all chaos in the world and life would have become an unbearable burden. For the righteous, death is the entrance through which they pass into the presence of their beloved Creator and Master. The sinners also, after having been purged of all spiritual dross in the purgatory called Hell, will march on the road to eternal life.

83. 'And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.'^{2754A}

84. 'My Lord, bestow wisdom on me and join me with the righteous.'²⁷⁵⁵

85. "And give me a true *and* lasting reputation among posterity;^{2755A}

86. 'And make me *one* of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss;

87. ^b"And forgive my father; for he is of the erring ones;²⁷⁵⁶

88. 'And disgrace me not on the day when they will be raised up,²⁷⁵⁷

89. 'The day when wealth and sons shall not avail;

وَالَّذِي أَطْعَمُنِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۖ

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَاجْعَلْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ۖ

وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ۖ

وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ ۖ

وَاعْفُ عَنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ ۖ

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ۖ

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ۖ

^a19 : 51. ^b9 : 114; 19 : 48; 60 : 5.

2754 A. Important Words :

For difference between *إثم* (sin) and *خطيئة* (fault) see 4 : 113. Whereas *خطيئة* can be both intentional or unintentional, *إثم* is intentional and has a wider scope than *خطيئة* which applies to human weaknesses, frailties, faults and failings.

دين is derived from *دان* i.e., he obeyed ; he was or became submissive and abased. *دين* means, obedience and submissiveness, religion ; a statute or ordinance ; reckoning or judgment ; system or usages inherited from ancestors ; custom or habit ; conduct ; a property or attribute ; recompense or requital ; compulsion ; mastery, ascendancy or ruling power ; retaliation (Lane and Aqrab).

2755 : Important Words :

حكم means ; (a) government, dominion, rule (3 : 80) ; (b) sanity in judgment (12 : 23) ; (c) judgment, decision (5 : 51) ; (d) ordinance, decree ; law (5 : 44) ; prophethood (26 : 22).

2755 A. Important Words :

For *لسان صدق* see 19 : 51.

Commentary :

Abraham left behind him such a good name that the followers of the three great Faiths of the world Judaism, Christianity and Islam, look upon him as their great progenitor and spiritual ancestor whose memory they respect and revere.

2756. Commentary :

As to why Abraham asked forgiveness for his father in spite of the fact that he was an idolater and Abraham had a Divine commandment not to ask forgiveness for idolaters, see 6 : 75.

2757. Commentary :

Resurrection is called *بعث* (*ba'th*) because after death man will be endowed with new and better faculties and new avenues for spiritual advancement will be laid open to him.

90. 'But he *alone is saved* "who brings to Allah a sound heart."²⁷⁵⁸

إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ۝٩٠

91. And Heaven shall be brought near to the righteous.²⁷⁵⁹

وَأَرْفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝٩١

92. And Hell shall be opened to those who have gone astray.²⁷⁶⁰

وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ ۝٩٢

93. And it will be said to them, 'Where is that which you worshipped.

وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ۝٩٣

94. 'Beside Allah? Can they help you or get help *for themselves*?'²⁷⁶¹

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ هَلْ يَنْصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ۝٩٤

37 : 85.

2758. Important Words :

سليم (sound) is derived from سلم *i.e.* he was safe or secure; he escaped ; سلم من العيب means, he was or became free from fault, defect, vice, etc. سليم means, secure or free from evil of any kind; sound; whole. It also means a person bitten by a snake; wounded, or wounded at the point of death. سليم قلب means, a heart completely free from all taint of evil, from disbelief, faithlessness, perfidy, spite, corruptness, etc. According to some قلب سليم also means, a grieving or sorrowful heart (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

Abraham is here stated to have possessed a sound heart. At another place he is described as "clement, tender-hearted and ever-inclined to God" (11 : 76). Abraham indeed had a sound and sympathetic heart. He grieved and pined for others (11 : 75).

2759. Commentary :

The words, "Heaven will be brought near to the righteous," mean that the righteous will be

given new and better faculties to enjoy the bliss of Paradise.

2760. Important Words :

برز (shall be opened) is derived from برز (baraza) which means, he issued forth; he or it appeared or became apparent after concealment or obscurity; it was or became prominent or projecting. برزه (barraza-hū) means, he made it apparent, manifest or evident (Lane & Aqrab).

غاوين (those who have gone astray) is the plural of غاوى which is active participle from غوى which means, he erred, he deviated from the right way or course; he failed in attaining his desire, he perished; he was disappointed (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 17.

2761. Important Words :

ينصرون (get help) is derived from نصره. نصره means, he aided or assisted him and انتصر means, he defended himself against his injurer; he got help. انتصر منه means, he revenged himself upon him. انتصر على عدوه means, he prevailed upon his enemy (Aqrab & Lane).

95. "Then will they be thrown headlong therein, they and those who have gone astray,"²⁷⁶²

96. "And the hosts of Iblīs, all together."²⁷⁶³

97. They will say, whilst they dispute between themselves therein:

98. 'By Allah, we were in manifest error,

99. 'When we held you as equal with the Lord of the worlds;

100. 'And none led us astray but the guilty ones.

101. 'And now we have no intercessors,

102. 'Nor any loving friend."²⁷⁶⁴

فَكَبِكُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلَّا الْجُرْمُومَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾

وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠٢﴾

^a27 : 91.

^a7 : 19; 38 : 86.

2762. Important Words :

كَبِكُوا (thrown headlong down) is derived from كَب. They say كَبَه (kabba-hū) i.e. he inverted it or turned it upside down. كَبَكَبَ الرجل على وجهه means, he threw down the man. كَبِكَبَه means, he turned him over, one part upon another; he threw him from the top of a mountain or well; he threw him into a deep place or hollow. كَبِكَبُوا فِيهَا means, they shall be thrown prostrate therein; they shall be thrown so as to turn over and over until at length they come to a stop therein or they shall be thrown headlong down (Lane).

2763. Commentary :

In this and the preceding verse three classes of people have been mentioned who will be thrown into Hell; (1) the disbelievers, i.e. those who are

led astray; (2) the leaders of disbelief, i.e. those who lead others astray; and (3) the hosts of Iblīs, i.e. those who instigate and incite others to reject truth. All the wicked people and evil-doers are confined to these three classes and they shall form the fuel of Hell.

2764. Important Words :

حَلِيم (loving) is derived from حَم (hamma) They say حَم التَّوْر i.e., the oven became hot; حَمَتِ الجَمْرَة means, the live coal became a piece of charcoal and ashes. حَمِيم means, a relation for whom one is anxious or solicitous or whom one loves and by whom one is loved; an affectionate relation who is quick to protect his kinsfolk; a beloved person; a friend; a true and loving friend; a man's brother; sweat;

103. "Would that there were for us a return *to the world*, that we might be among the believers!"

104. In this verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

105. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

٢. 6 106. The people of Noah treated the Messengers as liars,²⁷⁶⁵

107. When their brother Noah said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?'

108. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to *my* trust;

109. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.^{2765A}

110. ^b"And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

111. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.'

فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٥﴾

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٠٨﴾

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي ﴿١٠٩﴾

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۖ إِنِ اجْتَرَىٰ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي ﴿١١١﴾

^a2 : 168; 6 : 28; 23 : 100; 39 : 59. ^b10 : 73; 11 : 30.

vehemence of heat; hot water; cold water, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

2765. Commentary :

The people of Noah had rejected only one Messenger—Noah. But they have been represented in this verse as having rejected all the Messengers of God. This shows that the rejection of one Divine Messenger is in reality equivalent to the rejection of all of them. This is so because they are all commissioned as Messengers by the same Divine Authority and their Messages

proceed from the same Source and are identical in fundamentals and basic principles.

2765A. Commentary :

The words, *So fear Allah and obey me*, which have been addressed to his people from the mouth of every Prophet show that apart from the commandments embodied in Divine revelation, the believers are enjoined to obey the orders and instructions issued from time to time by the Prophet and to follow his precept and example.

112. They said, 'Shall we believe thee, when "it is the meanest that follow thee?"²⁷⁶⁶

قَالُوا أَنْتُمْ مِنْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّبَعَكَ الْأَرْذَلُونَ ط (١١٢)

113. He said, 'And what knowledge have I as to what they have been doing?

قَالَ وَمَا عَلَيَّ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ط (١١٣)

114. 'Their account is only with my Lord, if you only knew!^{2766A}

إِنْ حِسَابُهُمْ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ ط (١١٤)

115. "And I am not going to drive away the believers;²⁷⁶⁷

وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ط (١١٥)

116. 'I am only a plain Warner.'

إِن أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ط (١١٦)

^a11 : 28.

^b11 : 30

2766. Commentary :

It is an established fact of history that in the beginning of their missions only poor people follow the Messengers of God. This is quite in keeping with Divine plan. In this way God wants to show that the subsequent triumph of the Prophets predicted long before by them was due solely to God's help and not to any combination of worldly circumstances. The acceptance of the Divine message by poor people not only does not add to the material strength of the new Movement but also repels the wealthy and the powerful from it, inasmuch as they refuse to associate with those whom they regard as lowly and humble. But such has always been the Divine practice that these very humble and lowly people eventually prevail upon the wealthy and the powerful disbelievers.

2766A. Commentary :

The Qur'ān has used five different words at different places and in different contexts to suit the particular occasion and to explain fully the meaning. In a general sense they are all alike but as regards their finer shades of meaning

they are different. The words are شعور *i.e.*, perceiving a thing by means of any of the senses to know its minute particulars (2 : 155); عقل *i.e.*, withholding or restraining a person from adopting an evil course (12 : 3); فكر *i.e.*, reflecting upon and calculating a thing (6 : 51); تفقه *i.e.*, applying oneself to the acquisition of knowledge and becoming well versed in it (9 : 122), and تدبر *i.e.*, considering, examining or studying a thing repeatedly in order to know it (4 : 83).

2767. Commentary :

God's Prophets and worldly men have different standards to judge the values of life. The former judge the worth and value of a man by his actions and deeds while the latter judge it by his material means and his social status. Noah's enemies called his followers low and mean because of their material poverty and lack of social influence, but Noah himself refused to judge them by that standard. According to him the real criterion by which a man's worth should be judged were his good deeds. So he says that he does not know what his followers have been doing in the past. Their

117. They said, 'If thou desist not, O Noah, thou shalt surely be one of those who are stoned.'²⁷⁶⁸

قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَنُوحُ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ ط

118. He said, 'My Lord, my people have treated me as a liar;

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي كَذَّبُونِ ط

119. 'Therefore judge Thou decisively between me and them; and save me and the believers that are with me.'²⁷⁶⁹

فَاَفْتَحْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتَحًا وَنَجِّنِي وَمَنْ مَعِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ط

120. "So We saved him, and those who were with him in the fully laden Ark."²⁷⁷⁰

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ ط

121. ^bThen We drowned thereafter those who remained behind.

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدَ الْبَاقِينَ ط

122. In this, verily there is a Sign but most of them would not believe.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ط

^a54 : 14. ^b21 ; 78; 37 : 83; 54 : 12-13; 71 : 26.

past actions are God's concern alone and what he (Noah) knows of them is that they have believed in him and that is sufficient to establish their righteousness.

2768. Important Words :

مرجومين (stoned) is the plural of مرجوم which is derived from رجم. They say رجمه i.e. he pelted him with stones; he calumniated or slandered him; or abused him; he inveighed against him, he cursed him; he drove him away; he forsook him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 37.

2769. Important Words :

افتح (so judge) is imperative verb from فتح. They say فتح الباب i.e. he opened the door. فتح العاكرم بين الناس means, the judge decided the dispute between the people. فتح الله على نبيه means, God helped His Prophet and made him victorious (Aqrab). See also 8 : 20.

Commentary :

The last and most effective weapon in the armoury of the Prophets of God is prayer, and Noah prayed to God in the full agony of his heart.

2770. Important Words :

مشحون (fully laden) is passive participle from شحن. They say شحن السفينة i.e. he filled (or loaded) and completely equipped or furnished the boat. شحن الرجل means, he drove away the man. مشحون means, fully laden or filled and fully equipped with all necessary things (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

Noah built an ark of wood in which he and those who believed in him took refuge from the Deluge which overwhelmed his people. The Ark rested on the mountain, al-Jūdī. See also

123. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٣﴾

7 124. ^a*The tribe of 'Ād rejected the Messengers,*²⁷⁷¹

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

125. When their brother Hūd said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

126. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to *my* trust;

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٢٦﴾

127. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا

128. ^bAnd I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

129. 'Do you build monuments on every high place, seeking vain glory.'²⁷⁷²

اتَّبِعُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

^a 7 : 66-67. ^b 11 : 52.

11 : 45. Metaphorically, Noah's Ark may mean Noah's teaching, signifying that those who accepted his Message and followed his teaching were saved.

2771. **Commentary :**

For a more detailed note on 'Ād see 11 : 51. Briefly, 'Ād was not the name of a single but of a group of tribes whose different sections rose to power at different times. The name 'Ād is found in ancient books of geography which shows that a people bearing this name did indeed live in the past. The tribe has also been called 'Ādi Iram in the Qur'ān, (89 : 8). The Qu'rān has also mentioned the following facts about this tribe : (1) They built lofty buildings and no other people in Arabia attained to that height

of power to which they had attained (89 : 9). (2) They lived immediately after Noah. (3) They built monuments on elevated places (26 : 129) of which the ruins still exist in Arabia. (4) The territory in which these people lived was called Aḥqāf (46:22) which literally means meandering and zig-zag sand-hills. (5) They were destroyed by a violent wind which continued to blow over their territory consecutively for seven days, burying their chief cities under heaps of sand and dust (69 : 7-8). (6) The history of these people has now become wrapped in obscurity (46 : 26).

2772. **Important Words :**

ريع (high place) is derived from راع which means, it increased or augmented; it prospered

130. 'And do you erect palaces as though you will live for ever?'²⁷⁷³

وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

131. 'And when you lay hands upon any one, you lay hands as tyrants,'²⁷⁷⁴

وَإِذَا بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

133. 'And fear Him Who has helped you with all that you know.'²⁷⁷⁵

وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

or throve, it was in flourishing circumstances. ريع means, a high or elevated place; a road of any kind; or a mountain-path; the channel of the torrent of a valley from any high place (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

For تعبشون (seeking vain glory) see 23 : 116.

2773. Important Words :

مصانع (palaces) is the plural of مصنعة which is derived from صنع. They say صنع الشيء i.e. he made, wrought, constructed or manufactured the thing or he made it skilfully or well. مصانع means, a kind of tanks or reservoirs for collecting rainwater. The word also means towns, fortresses or palaces. They say هو من اهل المصانع i.e. he is of the people of the towns. It also signifies factories and great chemical works (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

This, the preceding, and the following verse show that the Adites were a powerful and cultured people. They had made great progress in science in their time. They built fortresses, palatial buildings and great reservoirs. They had their summer residences, their factories and mechanical works. They were specially advanced in architecture. They invented new weapons

and implements of war and erected great monuments. In short, like the present-day nations of the West they possessed all the complicated paraphernalia of a highly advanced civilization. They made great strides in knowledge but they consigned to oblivion the one supreme lesson of history, viz., that nations derive their real strength not from material things but from high ideals and good morals. As they became morally corrupt and spiritually depraved and turned a deaf ear to the warning of their Prophet to mend their ways, so they fell a victim to that terrible doom which is the inevitable lot of those who ignore Divine warning.

2774. Commentary :

This verse shows that the Adites were a highly powerful people of the time. They had developed imperialistic tendencies and had sought to subjugate weaker communities and destroy their cultures. This seems to be the significance of the words, "And when you lay hands upon anyone, you lay hands as tyrants."

2775. Commentary :

The Adites are told in the verse that God has bestowed on them material blessings and benefits, that they might know that He is the real Source

134. 'He has helped you with cattle, and sons,²⁷⁷⁶

أَمَدَّكُمْ بِأَنْعَامٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135. 'And gardens, and springs.

وَجَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٣٥﴾

136. 'Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an awful day.'

إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣٦﴾

137. They said, 'It is the same to us whether thou admonish *us* or whether thou be not of those who admonish.

قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَذَّبْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْوَعَّظِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

138. 'This is nothing but a habit of the ancients,²⁷⁷⁷

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

of all power and that they should be on their guard against defying His Commandments.

Commentary :

2776. Commentary :

In this and the next verse reference has been made to the three main sources and signs of the material power and pomp of a people, viz., their great numbers, their cattle and animals, and their gardens and springs.

This and the preceding verse show that the people of Hūd treated all his admonitions and warnings with extreme contempt. Taking *خلق* (*khulq*) in the sense of 'habit' the people of 'Ād are represented as saying to him: "There have been so-called Prophets before who also preached a so-called Divine message and gave warning of punishment to disbelievers. It was their habit to do so. But punishment never came. So this time also there is going to be no punishment." Taking the word in the sense of 'religion' the verse would mean, "the religion which is being presented to us is nothing new. It is an old, old story which has been repeated from time immemorial" (6 : 26). Taking it in the sense of 'a lie' the verse would signify: "All what you say is but a pure fabrication and a lie and we are not going to be punished for rejecting a forgery."

2777. Important Words :

خلق (habit) is derived from *خلق* (*khalāqa*). *خلقه* means, he measured it or he determined its measure or proportion; he fashioned or planned it; He (God) created it or brought it into existence; he forged or fabricated a story or a lie, etc. They say *صار ذاك له خلقا* (*khulqan*) i.e. that became to him a second nature, a habit. *خلق* (*khulq*) means, habit or second nature or custom or manner; religion; a lie (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 50.

139. And we shall not be punished.'

وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ۝١٣٩

140. "So they rejected him, and We destroyed them. In that indeed there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ

أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝١٤٠

141. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝١٤١

R. 8 142. ^bThe tribe of Thamūd rejected the Messengers,²⁷⁷⁸

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝١٤٢

143. When their brother Ṣāliḥ said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?'

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ صَالِحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ۝١٤٣

144. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust.

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ۝١٤٤

145. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ۝١٤٥

146. "And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝١٤٦

^a7 : 73; 50 : 15. ^b7 : 74; 11 : 62-63; 27 : 46. ^c11 : 52.

2778. Commentary :

This and the following several verses deal with the tribe of Thamūd. According to Abū Ismā'il the author of *Futūḥ al-Shām*, they were a very powerful people. Their rule and dominion had extended from Buṣṣā, a town in Syria to Aden. They had made great progress in agriculture and architecture. They were a highly civilized and cultured people. The tribe has been mentioned by Greek historians. They place it in a period not long before the Christian

era. Hījr or Agra, as they call it, is given as the home of these people. Al-Hījr which has also been known as *Madā'ini Ṣāliḥ* (the cities of Ṣāliḥ) and which seems to have been the capital of these people lies between Medina and Tabūk, and the valley in which it is situated is called Wādī Qura. The Qur'ān represents them as the immediate successors of 'Ād (7 : 75). From 40 : 31-32, it appears that they lived before the time of Moses. It is worthy of note that the accounts of the Prophets Noah,

147. 'Do you think you will be left secure amid the things *that you have* here,²⁷⁷⁹

اَتُتْرَكُونَ فِي مَا هُمْنَا اٰمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. 'Amid gardens and springs,

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾

149. 'And cornfields, and date-palms with *heavy* spathes near breaking?²⁷⁸⁰

وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ ﴿١٤٩﴾

150. "And you hew out houses in the mountains with great skill."²⁷⁸¹

وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَرٰهِنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

151. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ ﴿١٥١﴾

152. 'And obey not the bidding of those who exceed the bounds,

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا اَمْرَ السُّرِفِیْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. ^b'Who create disorder in the earth, and reform *it* not.'

الَّذِیْنَ یُفْسِدُوْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَا یُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

a7 : 75; 15 : 83.

b27 : 49.

Hūd and Ṣāliḥ have been given at various places in the Qur'ān and everywhere the order observed is the same, viz., the account of Noah precedes that of Hūd and the account of Hūd precedes that of Ṣāliḥ, which is the true chronological order. This shows that the Qur'ān gives accurately and in their true historical order the facts of history long consigned to oblivion and quite wrapped in obscurity. For a fuller note on Thamūd see 11 : 62.

2779. Commentary :

Prophet Ṣāliḥ, like Prophet Hūd, warns his people that their material power and prosperity without good ideals and moral strength which are the real source of the strength of a people would not save them from ruin and destruction and that if they rejected the Divine message they would not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labour in peace.

2780. Important Words :

هَضِيمٌ (with heavy spathes near breaking) is derived from هَضَمَ الشَّيْءَ i.e. he broke the thing. هَضَمَ فَلَانًا means, he treated him unjustly and usurped his rights. اِنْهَضَمَتِ الشَّرْ means, the fruit became broken or crushed. هَضِيمٌ means, so heavy as to be about to break on account of its weight (Lane & Aqrab).

2781. Important Words :

فَرِهَ (with great skill) is derived from فَرِهَ (faroha) and فَرِهَ (fariha). The former verb means, he was or became skilled or skilful; he was or became brisk, lively or active; he was or became beautiful. The latter i.e. فَرِهَ (fariha) means, he exulted or rejoiced above measure, or he exulted greatly and behaved insolently and ungratefully, the letter ه in this verb being substituted for the letter ح (Lane & Aqrab).

154. They said, 'Thou art but *one* of the bewitched';²⁷⁸²

155. 'Thou art only a man like ourselves. So bring a Sign, if thou art *one* of the truthful.'

156. "He said, 'Here is a she-camel: she has *her* turn of drinking, and you have *your* turn of drinking on an appointed day.'²⁷⁸³

157. ^b'And touch her not with evil lest there overtake you the punishment of an awful day.'²⁷⁸⁴

158. 'But they hamstrung her; and then they became regretful.'²⁷⁸⁵

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۖ فَأْتِ بَآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ

مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ

مَعْلُومٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾

وَلَا تَسَّوْهَا بِسَوْءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥٧﴾

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَاصْبِرُوا نَدِمْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

^a7 : 74 ; 11 : 65 ; 17 : 60 ; 54 : 28 ; 91 : 14. ^bSee 26 : 156. ^c7 : 78 ; 11 : 66 ; 54 : 30 ; 91 : 15.

2782. Commentary :

Whereas the peoples of Noah and Hūd accused their Prophets of forgery and lies, Prophet Ṣāliḥ to whose uprightness and unimpeachable character his people had themselves borne testimony (11 : 63), has been declared here as *مسحور* i.e. one who is deceived, deluded, beguiled, bewitched, circumvented or outwitted (Lane). Consistently with their admission of Ṣāliḥ's sincerity, honesty and uprightness, his people could not accuse him of forgery.

2783. Important Words :

شرب is infinitive noun from شرب (*shariba*). شرب الماء means, he drank the water. شرب (*shirbun*) means, water that one drinks ; a draught ; a share or portion of water that falls to one's lot ; the use of water for the purpose of watering sown fields or for beasts; turn of drinking ; a watering place : a time of drinking (Lane & Aqrab).

2784. Commentary :

The tribe of Thamūd were tried by means of the she-camel. The Prophet Ṣāliḥ used to go about preaching on his she-camel, so interference with her movements meant interference with his work. Metaphorically Ṣāliḥ himself may be regarded as God's she-camel, i.e., bearer of the Heavenly message, interference with whose movements was tantamount to interference with the plan and design of God Whose Messenger he was. For a fuller note see 7 : 74.

2785. Important Words :

نادمين (regretful) is the plural of نادم which is derived from ندم. They say ندم على ما فعل i.e. he grieved for what he had done; he regretted it; he repented of it. The difference between ندامة which is infinitive noun from this verb and توبة is that whereas ندامة means grieving for or

159. "So the punishment overtook them. In that verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ اِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ
اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

160. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾

9 161. ^bThe people of Lot rejected the Messengers,

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

162. When their brother Lot said to them, 'Will you not become righteous?

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطُ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

163. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust.

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١٦٤﴾

165. 'And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

166. "Do you, of all peoples, approach males,²⁷⁸⁶

أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

^a7 : 79; 11 : 68; 54 : 32. ^b7 : 81-83; 54 : 34. ^c7 : 82; 27 : 56; 29 : 29-30.

regretting a thing that has been done, توبه means the giving up of sins completely for their evilness, coupled with regret and grief for what has passed and the determination to see that it does not occur again and with the resolve to make amends for the moral lapse committed. This is why when a sinner regrets his evil deeds he is called نادم but when he repents of his sins and completely eschews them and is fully resolved against their recurrence and makes amends for the past lapses and turns to God, he is called تائب (Lane).

2786. Commentary :

The people of Lot indulged in immoral practices. In the case of every Prophet, the vice to which his people were principally addicted has been specially singled out for condemnation.

The verse may have two interpretations : (a) of the creatures of God you go into males instead of females: (b) you are the first of all the peoples to indulge in this heinous vice. The former seems to be the preferable meaning as a reference to it is made in the following verse.

167. 'And leave your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people who transgress.'^{2786A}

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ
بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

168. "They said, 'If thou desist not O Lot, thou wilt surely be *one* of the banished ones.'

قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَلُوطُ لَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

169. He said, 'Certainly I hate your practice.'²⁷⁸⁷

قَالَ إِنِّي بِعَمَلِكُمْ مِنَ الْقَالِينَ ط ﴿١٦٦﴾

170. 'My Lord, save me and my family from what they do.'

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

171. ^bSo We saved him and his family, all of *them*,

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ٧ ﴿١٦٨﴾

172. 'Save an old woman among those who stayed behind.'²⁷⁸⁸

إِلَّا مَجُورًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

173. ^dThen We destroyed the others.

ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا الْأَخْرِينَ ٨ ﴿١٧٠﴾

174. 'And We rained upon them a rain; and evil was the rain of those who were warned.

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَسَاءَ ٩ مَطَرُ السُّنْدَرِيِّنَ ﴿١٧١﴾

^a7 : 83; 27 : 57. ^b15 : 60; 29 : 33; 37 : 135; 51 : 36. ^c7 : 84 ; 11 : 82 ; 15 : 61 ; 27 : 58 ; 37 : 136. ^d37 : 137. ^e7 : 85; 25 : 41; 27 : 59.

2786A. The expression بل انتم قوم عادون besides the meaning given in the text signifies, "You contravene the laws of nature".

2787. **Important Words :**

قلى اللحم is derived from قلى. They say قلى اللحم i.e. he roasted the meat. قلى فلانا means, he struck him on the head. قلى الرجل means, he hated the man intensely, he detested him (Aqrab).

2788. **Important Words :**

غابرين (those who stayed behind) is the plural of غابر which is active participle from غاب (ghabara) which means, he or it lasted or continued;

he stayed or tarried; he passed away; it became dust-coloured. غبر (ghabira) means, the wound healed externally while it was in a withering state internally; it became putrefied (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 84.

Commentary :

In view of the different meanings of the word غبر given under 'Important Words' above, the expression فى الغابرين would mean: (1) she remained behind, (2) she concealed animosity in her heart, and (3) though she was the wife of a Prophet of God, she was internally corrupt.

175. In that verily there is a Sign,
but most of these would not believe.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

176. And surely thy Lord—He is
the Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧٦﴾

10 177. "The People of the Wood re-
jected the Messengers,"²⁷⁸⁹

كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ لُؤَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

178. ^bWhen Shu'aib said to them,
'Will you not be righteous?

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

179. 'Surely, I am unto you a
Messenger, faithful to *my* trust.

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾

180. 'So fear Allah, and obey me,

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا نِصْحَ اللَّهِ ﴿١٨٠﴾

^a 15 : 79; 38 : 14; 50 : 15. ^b 7 : 86 ; 11 : 85.

2789. Important Words :

لُؤَيْكَةِ (the wood) is derived from the verb أَيْكَ (ayika). أَيْكَ الشجر means, the trees grew thick and formed a wood. أَصْحَابُ لُؤَيْكَةِ means, a collection of numerous tangled or dense trees of the kind of lotus and wild berries; a thicket (Lane & Aqrab). See also 15 : 79.

Commentary :

The word لُؤَيْكَةِ seems to refer to Midian in the neighbourhood of which there existed tangled and luxuriant trees after which these people or a section thereof were called أَصْحَابُ لُؤَيْكَةِ. Midian lay in the Sinai Peninsula, a few miles from the sea. It was originally the name of a tribe who were descended from Abraham through Katurah and who had settled in the locality known after their ancestor Midian, son of Katurah.

The fact that according to the Qur'an the Prophet Shu'aib was sent both to أَصْحَابُ لُؤَيْكَةِ i.e. People of the Wood and أَصْحَابُ مَدْيَن i.e. People

of Midian (7 : 86 & 11 : 85) shows that both these were the names of two sections of the same people, Shu'aib particularly belonging to the section known as مَدْيَن, because where in the Qur'an he is stated as having been sent to مَدْيَن, he is described as "their brother" and where he is mentioned as having been sent to أَصْحَابُ لُؤَيْكَةِ, the words "their brother" are omitted.

Further evidence of the close relationship of the "People of the Wood" with the "People of Midian" is furnished by the fact that identical faults have been ascribed in the Qu'rān to both. Compare 26 : 182-184, 7 : 86 & 11 : 85-86. It may further be noted that Midian was both the name of the tribe and the town in which they lived. It was situated at the head of the gulf of 'Akaba and near it was to be found the wilderness or *Aika* abounding in dwarf trees of the species of wild plumbs and affording shelter to camels, sheep and goats. See also 15 : 79.

181. 'And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجَرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾

182. "Give full measure, and be not of those who give less,²⁷⁹⁰

أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

183. ^b"And weigh with a true balance,

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ﴿١٨٣﴾

184. "And diminish not unto people their things, nor act corruptly in the earth, making mischief.²⁷⁹¹

وَلَا تَبْخُسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْوُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

a11 : 85; 17 : 36; 55 : 10; 83 : 2-4.

b11 : 85. c7 : 86; 11 : 86.

2790. Important Words :

قِسْطَاس (balance) means, a balance or instrument for weighing; or the most even and most just kind thereof; or such as is just, of whatever kind it be (Lane).

2791. Commentary :

As at several places in the Qur'ān (Chapters 7th & 11th), in the present Sūra also the five Prophets, Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu'aib have been mentioned together and identical words have been put in their mouths, viz., (1) "I am unto you a Messenger faithful to my trust"; (2) "fear Allah and obey me"; and (3) "I ask you no reward for it." These three strikingly similar statements lead to three very important conclusions, namely, (1) that every Prophet is the first believer in the truth of his mission; (2) that having become himself first convinced of his truth he proceeds to convey his Message to his people; and (3) that his services to his people are quite sincere and selfless and are born of no motive of self-interest and self-seeking. Similarly, like Chapters 7th

and 11th a detailed reference has been made in the present Sūra to these five Prophets in the same order. In addition to the two fundamental teachings of all religions, viz., Unity of God and obedience to the Prophet of the time, great emphasis has been laid in the case of each Prophet on the vice from which his people particularly suffered. Noah's people seemed to have been divided into water-tight compartments and the socially well-to-do among them suffered from an exaggerated notion of false superiority. They would not mix with the poorer sections of the society and the main cause of their rejection of Noah was that persons of poor social status and low intellect had accepted him. The Adites or the tribe of Hūd took great pride in their military exploits, architectural achievements and in their factories and chemical works. The people of Ṣāliḥ gloried in their power, prestige and wealth. Lot's people shamelessly indulged in most unnatural and depraved sexual vice, while those of Shu'aib were dishonest in their commercial dealings. Each one of these vices has

185. 'And fear Him Who created you and the earlier peoples.'²⁷⁹²

186. They said, 'Thou art but *one* of the bewitched.

187. 'And thou art only a man like ourselves, and we believe thee to be *one* of the liars.

188. 'So cause fragments of the sky to fall on us, if thou art *one* of the truthful.'

189. He said, 'My Lord knows best what you do.'²⁷⁹³

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

وَمَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَإِنْ نُظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ

الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

قَالَ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

been separately dealt with in the account of the Prophet whose people particularly suffered from it. This is the way of Divine Prophets that, besides stressing the basic principles of religion, they lay special emphasis on the particular vice from which their people are found to suffer. In our own time, in view of mad hankering after material wealth and physical comforts which has held all the nations of the world in its firm grip and in view of callous indifference towards spiritual matters, Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah, used to take from every new convert a pledge to the effect that he would prefer religion to material interests.

2792. Important Words :

جِبِلَّة (peoples) is derived from جَبَلَ. They say جَبَلَهُ عَلَى كَذَا. i.e. He (God) created him. جِبِلَّة means, He (God) created him with an adaptation or a disposition to such a thing. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said جِبِلَّتِ الْقُلُوبَ عَلَى حُبِّ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهَا i.e. hearts have been created with a disposition to the love of him who does good to them (Hilya Abū Nu'aim).

جِبِلَّهُ means, he compelled him against his will to do the thing. جِبِلَّة means nature or temper ; innate or natural disposition ; idiosyncrasy ; numerous company of men ; a nation or people (Lane).

2793. Commentary :

Prophets of God are great lovers of mankind. Their hearts are full of the milk of human kindness. The people of Shu'aib challenged him to bring down Divine punishment on them if indeed he was a true Messenger of God. To this insolent challenge Shu'aib replied that his knowledge being imperfect it was not for him to decide if and when the punishment should and would overtake them and that it was God, their Lord and Creator, Who being fully acquainted with the nature of their deeds knew whether or not they had rendered themselves deserving of the punishment they demanded. In fact, God has reserved to Himself the right when and whom to punish and whom to spare. If it had been left to the Prophets to decide who was deserving of punishment, many prospective believers would have died as disbelievers.

190. So they declared him to be a liar. "Then the punishment of the day of overshadowing gloom overtook them. That was indeed the punishment of a dreadful day.

191. In that verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

192. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.²⁷⁹⁴

11 193. ^bAnd verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.²⁷⁹⁵

194. ^cThe Spirit, Faithful to the trust, has descended with it²⁷⁹⁶

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ

عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ^(١٩٠)

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ^(١٩١)

وَلَا تَرْبَكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ^(١٩٢)

وَأَنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ^(١٩٣)

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ^(١٩٤)

^a7 : 92; 11 : 95; 29 : 38.

^b20 : 5; 56 : 81.

^c2 : 98; 16 : 103.

2794. Commentary :

The verse signifies that God is Mighty, *i.e.* He has the power to give victory to the poor and resourceless believers, and He is Merciful, *i.e.* He shows mercy to a sinner when he sincerely turns to Him for forgiveness. In this verse the Meccans have been warned that the cause of the Holy Prophet was sure to triumph and that they will get a severe punishment like that of the rejectors of the Prophets of yore but if they repented, God will forgive them and show mercy to them.

2795. Commentary :

The verse continues the theme of the preceding verses. It purports to say that the revelation of the Qur'ān is no new phenomenon. As the Messages of the Prophets mentioned above were revealed by God, so has this last Message for all mankind also been revealed by Him, but with this difference that whereas the former Prophets were sent to their respective peoples,

the Qur'ān has been sent for all the nations of the world, because "it is a revelation from the Lord of *all* the worlds."

2796. Commentary :

In this verse the angel who brought the revelation from God to the Holy Prophet has been called *الروح الأمين* *i.e.* the Spirit Faithful to the trust. Elsewhere he is called *روح القدس* (16 : 103), *i.e.* the Spirit of holiness. Both are the attributive names of the Archangel Gabriel who was the medium through whom Divine revelation came to the Holy Prophet. The epithet *روح القدس* has been used to point to the eternal and complete freedom from every error or blemish in the Qur'ān and the use of the epithet *الروح الأمين* implies that it shall continue to enjoy Divine protection against all attempts to tamper with its text. This latter epithet has been used exclusively with regard to the revelation of the Qur'ān because the promise of everlasting Divine protection was held out to no other Divine

195. On thy heart, that thou mayest
be of the Warners,²⁷⁹⁷

عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

196. "In plain and clear Arabic
tongue."²⁷⁹⁸

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٩٦﴾

١٦ : ١٠٤ ; ٤١ : ٤٥ ; ٤٦ : ١٣ .

Scripture and their texts, in course of time came to be interfered and tampered with. Strangely enough, the Holy Prophet himself was known as الأمين (the Trusty) at Mecca. What a great Divine tribute to, and evidence of, the trustworthiness of the Qur'ān that its revelation was brought by an *Amīn* to an *Amīn* !

2797. Commentary :

The words 'on thy heart' have been added to indicate that the Quranic revelations were not merely inspired ideas which the Holy Prophet expressed in his own words but were the actual words of God Himself which descended upon the Prophet's heart through the medium of Gabriel. The verse also implies reference to a famous prophecy of Moses (Deut. 18 : 18) in which it is stated that God would put His words in the mouth of the Prophet whom He would raise from among the brethren of the Israelites. Of all revealed Scriptures the Qur'ān stands unique in this respect that from beginning to end it is the spoken Word of God (كَلَامُ اللَّهِ).

The allusion in the words "on thy heart" may also be to the purity of the Holy Prophet's heart and his perfect aptitude for receiving Divine revelation to which a beautiful reference has also been made in 24 : 36.

It may be noted in passing that Divine revelation descends, besides the heart, on the tongue and the ears. In 75 : 17 we have the words, "move not thy tongue with this revelation that thou mayest hasten to preserve it," which shows

that revelation descends on the tongue also. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said : "Sometimes the angel takes the form of a man and talks to me and I remember what he says" (Bukhārī). This ḥadīth shows that revelation descends on the ears also. But the revelation which descends upon the tongue or the ear descends at the same time on the heart as well.

2798. Commentary :

The word عرب from which عربي is a relative noun conveys the sense of fulness, abundance and clearness and the Arabic language is so called because its roots are innumerable full of meaning and because also it is most expressive, eloquent and comprehensive. It possesses suitable words and phrases for the full expression of all sorts of ideas and shades of meaning and being complete in respect of its roots it can discuss any topic with a precision and thoroughness unmatched in any other language. It was therefore natural and quite in the fitness of things that the Arabic language should have been selected as the vehicle for the revelation of the last and most perfect Divine Message for all mankind.

The word مبين also points to the Qur'ān being complete in itself. It needs the help of no external evidence to demonstrate the truth of its claims but contains adequate internal proofs to establish and substantiate them. The word also contains a beautiful hint to the effect that all that is essential for the attainment of nearness

197. And it is surely *mentioned* in the Scriptures of the former peoples.²⁷⁹⁹

وَأَنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٩٧﴾

to God and relates to the laws of the *Shari'at*, to ethics and matters of belief, in short to all that is necessary to make a perfect code of laws has been made quite clear and manifest in the Qur'ān.

2799. Commentary :

The advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān both have been foretold in the previous Divine Scriptures. Prophecies to this effect are to be found in the religious Scriptures of almost every Faith but the Bible, being the best known and most widely read of all revealed Books before the Qur'ān and also being its fore-runner and in its pristine purity being its counterpart as a Book of Divine laws, contains the largest number of such prophecies. Here are some of those prophecies :

- (1) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren; like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18 : 18-19).
- (2) And he said, the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them (Deut. 33 : 2).

The reference in the above prophecy is to the conquest of Mecca when the Holy Prophet marched into that town at the head of an army of exactly ten thousand Companions, holding the Qur'ān in his right hand.

- (3) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and

be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him (Isaiah 8 : 15-17).

- (4) The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge ; O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they did meet with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn swords, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me. Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail : And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished : for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it (Isaiah 21 : 13-17).

The reference in the above prophecy is evidently to Arabia and to the Battle of Badr when the sons of Kedar, the Quraish, suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of Muslims and many of their great fighters and archers were killed.

- (5) And thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name (Isaiah 620 : 2).

The prophecy foretells of a new people bearing a new name which will be given to them by God Himself. There is only one people in the world who have a name given to them by God and they are the Muslims. It is to the fulfilment of this prophecy that the Quranic verse clearly refers, viz., "He named you Muslims before and in this Book" (22 : 79).

- (6) I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, because the sun hath scorched me. (Song of Solomon 1 : 5-6.)

How aptly this description applies to the Holy Prophet and the Arabs !

- (7) God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran, Selah, His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise.... He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow : his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble (Habakkuk 3 : 3-7).

In this prophecy mention has been made not only of the Holy Prophet but also of the country in which he was to make his appearance and of the great success that was to attend his mission and the military exploits of his Successors. The Holy One whose praise filled the earth and who appeared from Paran was none else than Muḥammad, the Praised One. From his right hand went the fiery Law—the Qur'ān. He measured the earth and drove asunder the nations and before his irresistible armies the mighty and long established empires were scattered like chaff before the wind and his *Shari'at* is to last for ever.

- (8) Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the Scriptures? The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner:

this is the Lord's dong, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, *and* given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder (Matt. 21 : 42-45).

After Jesus, the spiritual kingdom was forever taken away from the House of Israel and given to another nation—the Ishmaelites who have brought forth the right fruits thereof. The Holy Prophet was the stone which the builders rejected and which became the head of the corner. The application to him of this prophecy cannot be disputed or doubted.

- (9) I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16 : 12-14).

This prophecy, too, applies to the Holy Prophet of Islam. He was the Comforter and the Spirit of truth. He guided mankind to *all* truth because he brought the most complete and perfect Law. He glorified Jesus and all other Prophets of God (4 : 158-160). He did not speak of himself, but whatsoever he heard that did he speak. About him the Qur'ān says : "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed" (53 : 4-5).

198. And is it not a Sign to them that the learned among the Children of Israel know it?²⁸⁰⁰

أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۖ

199. And if We had sent it down to one of the non-Arabs,

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ ۖ

200. And he had read it to them, they would never have believed in it.

فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ

201. Thus have We caused it (disbelief) to enter into the hearts of the sinful.²⁸⁰¹

كَذَٰلِكَ سَلَكْنَاهُ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۚ

2800. Commentary :

In the immediately preceding verse a brief reference was made to some of the prophecies that are to be found in the Bible about the Holy Prophet. After this brief reference the present verse brings home to the Israelites the fact that when their learned men know that there are prophecies about the Holy Prophet in their religious Scriptures, they have no justification for rejecting him. The words "the learned among the Children of Israel" may also refer to the Israelite Prophets who had made these prophecies.

In the present and the preceding five verses the following facts about the Qur'ān have been stated :

(a) The Qur'ān, being a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, is the last Divine Message for all mankind. (b) Having been brought down by الروح الأمين (Spirit Faithful to the trust), it will continue to enjoy full and complete protection from all interference and interpolation till the end of time. (c) It is from beginning to end God's own spoken Word. (d) It has been revealed in a most expressive, eloquent and

comprehensive language which is eminently fitted to express all sorts of ideas and shades of meaning. (e) Prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān are to be found in ancient religious Scriptures, especially in the Bible. (f) The learned men of Israel are fully conversant with these prophecies.

In view of these facts what better proofs are needed to establish the truth of the Qu'rān and the universality and finality of its Message.

2801. Commentary :

The pronoun 'it' in the expression "thus have We caused it to enter" referring to the evil practice of the disbelievers of rejecting truth the verse purports to say that this bad habit of disbelievers has its roots in their own hearts and is born of their indulgence in sin and vice and does not come from outside. The verse, in fact, states a general truth that when a man indulges in sin his consciousness of it becomes blunted and in course of time he even comes to develop a liking for it. It is in this way that sin corrodes and vitiates "the hearts of the sinful."

202. "They will not believe in it until they see the grievous punishment."²⁸⁰²

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ۝

203. But it will come upon them suddenly, while they know not,

فَيَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝

204. And they will say, 'Shall we be given any respite?'

فَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُونَ ۝

205. "What! do they seek to hasten Our punishment?"

أَفِعِدَّائِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ۝

206. "What thinkest thou? If We let them enjoy *the good things of this world* for years;

أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ ۝

207. Then there comes to them that with which they are threatened.

ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ۝

208. Of no avail shall be to them that which they were allowed to enjoy.

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَعْوُونَ ۝

209. "And never did We destroy any township but it had Warners."²⁸⁰³

وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُونَ ۝

210. *This is* an admonition; and We are not unjust.

ذِكْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ۝

^a15 : 14. ^b22 : 48; 27 : 72-73; 51 : 15. ^c20 : 132; 28 : 62. ^d6 : 132; 11 : 118; 20 : 135; 28 : 60.

Or the pronoun 'it' may refer to the Qur'ān. In this sense the verse would mean that the truth of the Qur'ān is made to enter into the hearts of disbelievers by means of the convincing proofs and arguments given in support of it. They become conscious of its truth but still they reject it.

2802. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that when the hearts of the sinful become vitiated on account of their indulgence in sin and vice, they develop

an antipathy towards truth and it becomes difficult for them to accept it and thus by rejecting the truth they invite Divine punishment to overtake them.

2803. Commentary :

The verse refers to a Divine law that punishment does not overtake a people unless a Prophet is first sent to them and by rejecting and opposing him they render themselves deserving of it. See also 17 : 16; 28 : 60; 35 : 38.

211. And the evil ones have not brought it down.^{2803A}

وَمَا تَنْزَلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ ﴿٢١١﴾

212. They are not fit for it, nor have they the power *to do so*.²⁸⁰⁴

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٢١٢﴾

213. ^aSurely, they are debarred from hearing.²⁸⁰⁵

إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْرُوُونَ ﴿٢١٣﴾

214. ^bCall not, therefore, on any other god beside Allah, lest thou become one of those who are punished.²⁸⁰⁶

فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٢١٤﴾

^a11 : 21. ^b17 : 23, 40; 28 : 89.

2803A. Commentary :

The theme about the truth of the Qur'ān commenced in the preceding verse is continued in the verse under comment. It reiterates the claim that satans or evil persons have no hand in producing the Qur'ān. In the following verses proofs have been given to support and substantiate this claim.

2804. Commentary :

The verse contains two arguments in support of the claim that satans could have no hand in the production of the Qur'ān. The first argument is embodied in the words : "They are not fit for it," which means that the teaching of the Qur'ān constitutes a most effective and uncompromising condemnation of all that satans stand for. Satan and his followers have been repeatedly and in most scathing terms denounced in the Qur'ān and all good men have been exhorted to treat Satan as their enemy and not to follow him and to lead righteous lives. Thus satanic persons could not possibly have helped in the production of the Qur'ān.

The second argument is continued in the words "nor have they the power to do so" which signify that the teaching of the Qur'ān is of such exalted character and contains such sublime

truths that it is beyond the power of satans to produce the like of it. Elsewhere the Qur'ān says : "If mankind and the *Jinn* gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another (17 : 89). Moreover, the Qur'ān contains mighty prophecies about the ultimate triumph of truth which only God, the Knower of the unseen could make. The satans could not make them as they have no knowledge of the future.

2805. Commentary :

This verse embodies the third argument to show that sinful and vicious people can have no access to the sources of such sublime and noble teachings as are contained in the Qur'ān. The secrets of the unknown are revealed only to God's Elect and His chosen Messengers and satans descend only on liars and wicked people.

2806. Commentary :

This verse contains the fourth argument in support of the claim that the Qur'ān could not have been the Devil's work. A satanic production could not have laid so much stress on the Unity of God as has been laid in the Qur'ān.

215. And warn thy nearest kinsmen,²⁸⁰⁷

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

216. "And lower thy wing of mercy to the believers who follow thee.

وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

217. Then if they disobey thee, say, 'I repudiate all connection with what you do.'

فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

218. ^bAnd put thy trust in the Mighty, the Merciful,²⁸⁰⁸

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١١٨﴾

219. "Who sees thee when thou standest up in Prayer.

الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿١١٩﴾

220. And *Who sees* thy movements among those who prostrate themselves before God.²⁸⁰⁹

وَتَقَلَّبَكَ فِي السُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٠﴾

^a15 : 89.

^b25 : 59; 33 : 49.

^c73 : 21.

2807. Commentary :

It is on record that when this verse was revealed the Holy Prophet stood on mount Ṣafā and called every Quraish tribe by name and warned them of the Divine punishment that would overtake them if they did not accept his Message and give up their evil ways. He is also reported to have told his daughter Fāṭimah, his aunt Ṣafiyya and other members of his household that no relationship with him but only their own righteous deeds would save them from Divine wrath (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Tafsīr*).

2808. Commentary :

The *Sūra* has given a brief account of the teachings of seven great Prophets of God and of the persecution and opposition they had to meet at the hands of their enemies and of the sad end to which the latter came on account of their rejecting the Divine message. The account of every Prophet ended with the highly significant words, viz., "And thy Lord—He is the Mighty,

the Merciful," meaning that God possessed the power to punish the rejectors and persecutors of the Prophets and was Merciful to those who believed in them. After this account the Holy Prophet has been commanded to preach his Message and has been told that like the Prophets mentioned above he would also face fierce opposition and persecution. He has been further enjoined to pray and to put his trust in the Mighty and Merciful God, the injunction implying that those who will persist in opposing and persecuting him will experience God's might but those who will accept him will be shown mercy.

2809. Commentary :

This verse pays a glowing tribute to the righteousness and nobility of the Holy Prophet's Companions. The word *ساجدين* apparently refers to them. Blessed was the Prophet who was surrounded by such godly men. Human history has failed to produce another example of such a noble Master, loved and followed by such devoted and righteous disciples.

221. He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

222. Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend?²⁸¹⁰

223. They descend on every great liar *and* sinner,

224. Repeating what they hear, and most of them are liars.²⁸¹¹

225. And *as for* the poets—it is the erring ones who follow them.²⁸¹²

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٢١﴾

هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

تَنَزَّلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ كَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾

2810. Commentary :

The verse reverts to the subject dealt with in vv. 211-213 above. Generally two charges were made against the Holy Prophet; viz., (a) that satans descended upon him and (b) that he was a poet. The first charge has been effectively rebutted in vv. 211-213 above. The present verse, however, treats with another aspect of the same charge. It purports to say that satans cannot descend upon the Holy Prophet because he is a paragon of piety and righteousness. They only descend upon their own prototypes and counterparts—confirmed liars and habitual sinners. See next verse

2811. Important Words :

يلقون (they repeat what they hear). يلقون is derived from لقي and لقيه means, he met or found him or it. ألقى الشيء means, he cast or let fall the thing. ألقى إليه القول means, I told or communicated to him the saying. ألقى إليه المودة means, I offered to him love or affection. ألقى إليه السمع means, he listened to him or gave ear to him for listening. يلقون السمع means, they give ear or they communicate to others, tell others or repeat to others what they hear (Lane & Qadīr).

2812. Commentary :

In this verse the second imputation that the Holy Prophet is a poet (21 : 6) is rebutted. Four reasons which have been spread over the present and the next three verses constitute this rebuttal. They are : (1) Those who follow and associate with the poets are men of no high moral character. They are prone to err and stray away from the path of rectitude. But the Holy Prophet brought about a wonderful moral transformation among his followers who became possessed of very noble ideals and very high moral character. (2) The poets have no fixed ideal or programme in life. They, as it were, wander about distractedly in every valley. But the Holy Prophet had a very great and sublime mission in life. It was the moral and spiritual regeneration of the depraved Arab society and through them the reformation and resuscitation of the whole degenerate and corrupt humanity. It was given to no woman-born to pursue and achieve a higher and nobler ideal. (3) The poets do not practise what they preach but the Holy Prophet was not only the noblest preceptor but the greatest man of action and a model exemplar also. (4) The poets praise and abuse other

226. Dost thou not see how they wander aimlessly in every valley,²⁸¹³

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ ﴿٢٢٦﴾

227. And that they say what they practise not ?

وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

228. Save those who believe and do good works, and remember Allah much, and retaliate *only* after they are wronged. And the wrong-doers will soon know to what place of return they shall return.^{2813A}

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٨﴾

people as it suits them and sometimes even make bold to prophesy about the future but never know what their own end would be. But the Holy Prophet, deserted by his own kith and kin and amidst the severest persecution, when all was dark and dismal around him, emphatically declared that he would eventually succeed and he did succeed.

Commentary :

The poets pursue every colourful fancy. Their themes have little coherence and consistency, and they lack continuity. Their thought is fragmentary.

2813. Important Words :

يَهِيمُونَ (wander aimlessly) is derived from هَام which means, he was or became thirsty. They say هَامَ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ i.e. the man went at random, not knowing where he was going (Lane & Aqrab).

2813A. Commentary :

In this verse an exception has been made in regard to a certain class of poets, viz., that not all poets belong to the category referred to above (vv. 225-227). There are poets who use their God-given poetic gifts to further the cause of truth and lead righteous lives. They are excepted from the poets referred to above.

CHAPTER 27

AL-NAML

(Revealed before Hijra)

Context and Date of Revelation

The immediate connection of this *Sūra* with its predecessor consists in the fact that towards the end of the latter *Sūra* it was stated that in accordance with the invariable and time-honoured Divine practice the Faithful will triumph and disbelievers will meet with discomfiture and will come to grief. As the main subject of the last *Sūra* related to the defeat and destruction of disbelief, great stress was laid in it on the fact that consistently with that practice ruin will seize the opponents of the Holy Prophet also. In the present *Sūra*, however, greater emphasis has been laid on another more subtle aspect of the same subject, *viz.*, that despite the weakness of believers in power, prestige and material resources, their cause has always progressed and prospered. Though towards the close of the *Sūra* a brief reference has been made to the ultimate destruction of disbelief, much greater emphasis has been laid on the basic religious principle that those who listen to the voice of God and give intellectual and ideological allegiance and unqualified and unstinted support to the Divinely established system always achieve success and honour. In this connection it is mentioned that the progress of Muslims will not be temporary and short-lived but will extend over a long period, and unlike the Israelites who were rulers only in their own country, Muslims will conquer and rule over vast lands.

Another point worth special notice which serves as a connecting link between the present and the preceding *Sūra* is that towards the close of the preceding *Sūra* the disbelievers were mentioned as saying that the Holy Prophet was a poet and that satans descended upon him. To this taunt or charge of disbelievers the *Sūra* returned the answer that satans descended only upon sinful liars and forgers who mixed falsehood with truth. This is why hotchpotch of much falsehood mixed with a little truth could never produce any good results. It further said that the poets follow no great aim or fixed programme in life. They wander, as it were, distractedly in every valley and do not practise what they preach. They follow satans and are in turn followed by those who have lost the right path. To continue and elaborate the subject the present *Sūra* opens with a firm declaration that the Qur'ān is God's own revealed Word. It explains fully and completely all matters that concern man's spiritual life and supports its principles and ideals with sound and cogent arguments. It has been revealed to the Holy Prophet from the Wise and Almighty God. Its followers worship their Lord morning and evening. They are kind and sympathetic

towards their fellow-beings and believe also in the Hereafter. Thus there is a world of difference between disbelievers and followers of the Qur'ān.

According to Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair the *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca. Other Muslim scholars also support this view.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

Whereas the preceding *Sūra*, i.e. (Al-Shu'arā') opened with the abbreviated letters طسم (Ṭā Sin Mīm), this *Sūra* begins with the letters طس (Ṭā Sin), the letter م (Mīm) having been omitted. This shows that the subject-matter of the present *Sūra* constitutes a continuation and extension of the subject-matter of its predecessor, though in a little different form. The *Sūra* begins with a brief reference to the vision which Moses, the great Israelite Prophet, saw of Divine Majesty and proceeds to give a somewhat detailed account of David and Solomon in whose reigns the Israelite conquests, power and material glory reached their zenith ; the implication being that Muslims will also make equal, even greater, conquests and will rule over vaster lands and that their splendour, grandeur and glory will last much longer, but if like the Israelites they abandoned the path of rectitude and took to evil practices, they too will forfeit God's favour and will be visited with Divine punishment.

After this, the *Sūra* deals at some length with the two most fundamental and basic religious beliefs—existence of God and life after death. To support and substantiate the first thesis, viz., the existence of God, the *Sūra* adduces arguments from nature, man's inner self and from his collective life. After alluding to the fact that God's great powers are manifested in the marvellous working of the laws of nature, the *Sūra* advances the acceptance of prayer by God as an invincible argument in proof of His existence. It portrays very graphically that when man in the hour of distress cries to God in the agony of his soul, God listens to his cry. Indeed, if man had not witnessed great miracles being performed through the power of prayer God's existence would have remained enshrouded in mystery and doubt. Another unanswerable argument given by the *Sūra* is that God reveals Himself to His Messengers and righteous servants and vouchsafes to them the knowledge of the unknown, instances of which are to be witnessed in every age.

After having dealt with the subject of the existence of God, the *Sūra*, proceeds to deal with the second most important religious subject, viz., life after death. After briefly pointing to other arguments it advances as one unassailable proof in support of life after death the great moral and spiritual revolution which the Holy Prophet brought about among his people, and then proceeds to expatiate upon it. The argument begins and develops in this way. The Arabs had completely despaired of their future. They heedlessly wallowed in the quagmire of immoral ways and practices and rejected the Holy Prophet's Message and refused to believe that there was a life after death and that they will be required to render an account of their deeds. Morally and spiritually they were virtually a dead people. But they received a new life through the Qur'ān. The water of Divine revelation descended upon the bleak and barren soil of Arabia and it bloomed and

blossomed and pulsated with a new vigorous life and by acting upon its teachings the Arabs, who were erstwhile the scum and dregs of humanity, became its leaders and teachers. This marvellous revolution constituted a proof positive of the fact that God Who could raise a spiritually dead people to new life had the power to raise the dead to life again after they would become bones and particles of dust.

The *Sūra* closes on the note on which it had begun, viz., the subject of the Quranic revelation, and proclaims that God has chosen Mecca as the centre for His last Message and that from this town shall emanate a Divine light which will illumine the whole world. It further declares that in order to add effulgence and lustre to the light of the Qur'ān God will show mighty Signs in every age.

سُورَةُ النَّملِ مَكِّيَّةٌ ﴿١٤﴾

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²⁸¹⁴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾

2. ^bTā Sīn. "These are verses of the Qur'ān, and of an illuminating Book,"^{2814A}

طس تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

3. ^dA guidance and good tidings to those who would believe,²⁸¹⁵

هُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

^aSee 1:1. ^b26 : 2, 28 : 2. ^c15 : 2; 26 : 3; 28 : 3. ^d2 : 3 ; 10 : 58 ; 12 : 112 ; 31 : 4.

2814. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2814 A. Commentary :

For a general discussion about abbreviated letters see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2 and about طس see 26 : 2.

It is significant that whereas 26th and 28th Chapters which have the abbreviated letters طسم in their beginning open with the verse "These are the verses of the clear Book," the present *Sūra* which is prefixed with طس begins with the verse, "These are verses of the Qur'ān, and of an illuminating Book." This shows that while in the former two *Sūras* the Qur'ān was alluded to only with reference to Moses's Book, in the present *Sūra* it has been mentioned expressly and by name, as in the verse under comment as well as in vv. 7, 93.

One more fact deserves special notice. The verse has used two descriptive words for the Qur'ān, viz., كتاب *i.e.* the Book and القرآن *i.e.* the Qur'ān. The use of these two words implies a mighty prophecy that the Holy Book of Islam will continue to be preserved in the form of a book till the end of time and that it will be widely studied and read, the word قرآن meaning a

book that is read. This prophecy was made at a time when the very art of printing had not yet been known and it was made to a people most of whom could not even read or write. The prophecy has met with marvellous fulfilment. Even the most hostile opponent of Islam can hardly deny the fact that no other book is so widely and frequently read as the Qur'ān. The famous German Orientalist Noldeke writes : "Since the use of the Koran in public worship, in schools and otherwise, is much more extensive than, for example, the reading of the Bible in most Christian countries, it has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence" (Enc. Bri. 9th edit. vol. 16, p. 597).

2815. Commentary :

The verse points to the two prominent characteristics of the Qur'ān to which repeated reference has been made in it, viz., (1) that it is a guidance and (2) that it gives good tidings to the believers. These characteristics signify that the Qur'ān contains all those rules of conduct, precepts and ordinances which are required for man's moral and spiritual development and progress, and are essential for the achievement of the

4. "Who observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt, and have firm faith in the Hereafter.

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣﴾

5. ^bAs to those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds *appear* beautiful to them, so they are wandering blindly.^{2815A}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ
فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٤﴾

6. It is they who shall have a grievous torment, and they alone it is who shall be the greatest losers in the Hereafter.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ الْأَخْسَرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

7. Verily, thou hast been given the Qur'ān from the presence of One Wise, All-Knowing.²⁸¹⁶

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلْقَى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾

٤٢ : ٤ ; ٨ : ٤ ; ١٤ : ٣٢ ; ٣١ : ٥.

١٦ : ٢٣ ; ١٧ : ١١ ; ٣٤ : ٩.

goal of human life, and that it also holds out to believers the promise that if they acted upon its teaching they will enjoy prosperity, prestige and power in this world and the pleasure and nearness of God in the life to come.

2815 A. **Commentary :**

Elsewhere in the Qur'ān we have : "Satan made all that they did seem fair to them" (6 : 44) and "And when Satan made their deeds seem fair to them" (8 : 49). It is clear from these two verses that it is Satan who makes evil and mischievous deeds of evil-doers look beautiful in their eyes. But in the verse under comment it is stated that God makes the deeds of disbelievers appear beautiful to them. Thus there seems to be a contradiction between the present verse and vv. 6 : 44; 8 : 49. But in reality there is no contradiction because it is a law that if a person pursues an evil course, thinking that he is not accountable for what he does he begins to justify his conduct as good and

proper and so it begins to appear to him in that light. This, in fact, is the consequence of his own conduct but inasmuch as it comes about in accordance with a Divine law, it is attributed to God, because it is God Who has ordained that disbelief in the Hereafter should result in evil deeds appearing beautiful in the eyes of disbelievers; otherwise God only commends good and righteous deeds and has made disbelief, transgression and disobedience hateful and repugnant (49 : 8).

2816. **Important Words :**

لَقِيَ (thou hast been given) is derived from لَقِيَ. They say لَقِيَ فلاناً i.e. he met him, found him, saw him, came face to face with him. لَقِيَ فلاناً الشيء (laqqā) means, he threw the thing towards him, he made him meet or experience it. See 2 : 38 and 24 : 16.

Commentary :

The verse is a clear denial of the charge that the Holy Prophet had his own ideas written

8. ^aRemember when Moses said to his family, 'I perceive a fire. I will bring you from there some information, or I will bring you a flame, a burning brand, that you may warm yourselves.'²⁸¹⁷

9. So when he came to it, he was called *by a voice*, 'Blessed is he who is in the fire and also those around it; and glorified be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'²⁸¹⁸

10. 'O Moses' ^bverily I am Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.'^{2818A}

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا سَأَتِيكُمْ
مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ

تَصْطَلُونَ ①

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ

مَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَنَ اللَّهُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ②

يُمُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ③

^a20 : 11; 28 : 30. ^b20 : 12-13, 15 ; 28 : 31 ; 79 : 17.

down and collected in the form of a book and called it "the Qur'ān." It also constitutes an unequivocal declaration of the fact that the Prophet learnt the Qur'ān direct from the Wise and All-Knowing God.

2817. **Important Words :**

تصطلون (warm yourselves) is derived from صطل which is the same as صلى. They say صلى النار i.e. he was or became burned by the fire or he endured the heat of the fire. اصطل means, he warmed or burned himself by the fire (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

It was not actual fire that Moses had seen. Had it been so he would have used the expression انى آنست النار i.e. I have perceived the fire, instead of انى آنست ناراً i.e. I have perceived a fire. In fact it was a vision that Moses had seen, fire symbolizing the love of God. It is worthy of note that most of the major incidents connected with Moses that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān, were not incidents which actually took place in the material and physical world but were visions which symbolized great landmarks in his spiritual development and prophetic mission.

Besides the vision about the rod (7 : 118) and that concerning the breaking of the mountain into pieces (7 : 144) there are other important instances of such visions in the Qur'ān, the verse under comment affording one such instance. See also 20 : 11.

2818. **Commentary :**

The expression من فى النار ومن حولها may have the following two interpretations : (a) who is in search of the fire, and who is near it; (b) who is actually in the fire and who is about to enter it, 'fire' symbolizing the fire of God's love or the fire of trials and tribulations.

It is wrong to apply, as some Commentators of the Qur'ān have done, the expression بورك من فى النار to God. The word بورك (blessed) being in passive voice cannot be used about God, the right word to use about the Almighty is تبارك which means, He is blessed.

2818 A. **Commentary :**

The fire was not God, nor was God in the 'fire.' Holy is He and exalted far above assuming

11. "And throw down thy rod." And when he saw it move as though it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not look back. 'O Moses, fear not. Verily, I am *with thee*; the Messengers need have no fear in My presence.²⁸¹⁹

12. 'As to those who do wrong and then substitute good for evil; *to them*, I am indeed Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁸²⁰

13. "And put thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without any disease. *This is* among the nine Signs unto Pharaoh and his people for they are a rebellious people."²⁸²¹

14. But when Our sight-giving Signs came to them, they said, "This is plain magic."²⁸²²

وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهَا تُهْتَزُّ كَانَتْهَا حَآجًا وَدَلِيلًا
مُذِيرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يُونُسُ لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ
لَدَى الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١١﴾

إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ
سُوءٍ تَفِي تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِقِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّؤْتَمِنٌ ﴿١٤﴾

^a7 : 118 ; 20 : 20 ; 28 : 32. ^b7 : 109 ; 17 : 102 ; 20 : 24. ^c43 : 31 ; 61 : 7.

any material shape or being confined to space. The 'fire' was a manifestation of God which cast its reflection upon all that was near.

2819. Commentary :

For a detailed discussion of the miracle of the rod and the white hand see 7 : 108 & 109.

2820. Commentary :

The particle *إِلا* is used here as *إستثناء منقطع* and introduces a new statement; or it may have been used in the sense of *ولا* meaning "and not" or "nor." In this sense of the word the verse under comment conjoined with the preceding

verse would mean: the Messengers need have no fear in My presence nor those who do wrong and then substitute good for evil. For discussion of *إستثناء منقطع* see 2 : 35.

2821. Commentary :

For nine Signs see 7:134. Briefly, they were: the Signs (1) of the rod and (2) the white hand (7:108-109); (3) of lice; (4) frogs; and (5) locusts; (6) of blood; (7) and storm; (7 : 134); (8) of drought and (9) destruction of fruits (7 : 131).

2822. Important Words :

أبصر (sight-giving) is act. participle from *أبصر* which is again derived from *بصر* which means, he saw, he became seeing. *أبصره* means, he

15. "And they rejected them wrongfully and arrogantly, while their souls were convinced of them. See then, how *evil* was the end of those who acted corruptly!

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلُمًا وَعُلُوًّا
مَعًا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

..2 16. And We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they said, 'All praise belongs to Allah, Who has exalted us above many of His believing servants.'²⁸²³

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَ الْخَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

a2 : 88.

perceived it mentally; he knew or understood it. *بصيرة* means, clear, manifest; illumining; sight-giving, causing to have mental perception or knowledge (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 204 & 12 : 94.

2823. Commentary :

After a brief account of Moses, the Founder of the Israelite Dispensation and its greatest Prophet, the present and the following several verses make a special mention of David and Solomon. Of all the Israelite Prophets particular reference to these two Prophets in the verse possesses a special significance. The Israelite power, prosperity and prestige had attained their zenith in their reigns. David was a great warrior and a mighty and sagacious statesman. He was the Founder of the Judean dynasty at Jerusalem and the real builder of the Hebrew kingdom. Through him all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba became united and organized into a powerful nation whose kingdom extended from the Euphrates to the Nile. Solomon consolidated the kingdom he had inherited from his father. He was a great and good monarch. He greatly extended and

developed the trade and commerce of his country. He was the master-builder among the Israelite kings and is best known for the building of the famous Temple at Jerusalem, which became the *Qibla* of the Israelites. The special reference in these verses to these two mighty Israelite kings implies a prophecy that rulers of as mighty, even mightier, empires and enjoying as great, even greater, glory and prosperity will also rise among the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who was the like of Moses.

The words "We gave knowledge to David and Solomon" may either mean that God endowed them with wisdom and knowledge in abundance as is apparent from the wise decisions they made or that being Divine Messengers God disclosed to them the secrets of the unknown and imparted to them special understanding and realization of Divine attributes which constitute the fountain-head of all knowledge. In reality the greatest proof of the truth of a Divine Teacher consists in the fact that he is vouchsafed in an unusually large measure knowledge of the things beyond human ken (72 : 27-28). This is one explanation of the above-mentioned words. They may also imply an allusion to the great

17. And Solomon was heir to David. And he said, 'O ye people, we have been taught the language of birds; and we have had everything bestowed upon us. This indeed is *God's* manifest grace.'^{2823A}

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَنُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلَّمْنَا
مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ
الْفَضْلُ الْبَيِّنُ ①٤

progress and advance made during the reigns of these two Prophets in navigation and in the preparation of implements of war which is also a branch of knowledge and to which a reference has been made in the verses that immediately follow, and also in 21 : 81-83; 34 : 11-14; 38 : 19-21.

2823 A. Important Words :

منطق (language) is derived from نطق which means, he spoke with sound and letters which made clear his meaning. نطق الكتاب means, the book explained and made clear. Thus نطق (nutq) applies to both articulate and inarticulate speech and to the condition of a thing which is as significant as articulate speech. It is of two kinds: external, viz., spoken words; internal, viz., understanding. The word is also used with regard to animals and birds when the use is metaphorical (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

For طير (birds) see next verse.

Commentary :

Solomon was heir to both the temporal power and prophetic office and spiritual knowledge of his father, David. The word وريث (was heir) here has special reference to the spiritual heritage of David because whereas kingship and temporal power and property descend from father to son, prophethood does not.

Birds and insects have their own means of

communication. Migratory birds fly from one region to another with the change in weather. They fly in flocks and their flight is orderly. Similarly, ants live in communities and the bees have a well regulated system of government. This could not be possible without there being some means of communication between them. This means of communication may be called their language. Prophets David and Solomon are stated here to have been taught the language of birds which may be taken as signifying that they had learnt how to make use of birds. The art of using birds for carrying messages from one place to another had been very much developed by Solomon and frequent use of it made in the management of the far-flung empire over which he ruled.

If the word طير be taken to signify righteous men (3 : 50) who soar high into the spiritual firmament and attain nearness to God, the words "we have been taught the language of birds" would mean that David and Solomon knew the language in which God's Elect speak i.e. they possessed the wisdom and knowledge that is given to highly spiritual men.

The expression "and we have had everything bestowed upon us," means that all things that were necessary to make the Israelites a strong and prosperous people were bestowed upon them in the reigns of David and Solomon. It clearly does not mean that every existing thing was

18. "And there were gathered together unto Solomon his hosts of Jinn and men and birds, and they were formed into *separate* divisions,"²⁸²⁴

وَحْشَرِ سُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودَهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ
وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ١٨

38 : 19-20.

given to them. The words point to no exclusive prerogative of these two Prophets. Identical words have been used with regard to the Queen of Saba' (27 : 24).

2824. Important Words :

يوزعون (formed into separate groups) is derived from وزع. They say فلانا اوبفلان *i.e.* he hindered or led or drove such a one and restrained him, and he incited or urged him with such a one. وزع الجيش means, he stopped the first part of the army so that their last part may join them. They say رأيتہ يزع الجيش *i.e.* I saw that he was arranging the soldiers in proper order and placing them in rows. وزع المال بينهم (wazza'a) means, he distributed the property among them. أوزع الله فلانا means, God inspired such a one. الاوزاع means, parties; companies (Aqrah). Thus according to the different significations of the root word, the Quranic expression فهم يوزعون would mean, they were formed into separate groups or classes; (2) they were hindered from cruel and tyrannous acts; (3) they marched like an ordered and disciplined army; and (4) their first part was stopped so that their last part might join them. These words show that Solomon had a well trained and disciplined army which had several separate and distinct departments.

طير (birds) is the plural of طائر which is active participle from طار which means, it flew or moved in the air by means of wings. طير besides

meaning "birds" may also apply to swift animals such as horses, etc. طيار (ṭayyār) which is an intensive form of طائر signifies a sharp-spirited and quick-footed horse that runs so fast that it seems to be flying (Lane). See also 3 : 50; 7 : 132 & 17 : 14.

جنه (Jinn) is derived from جن (janna). جنه means, it concealed, veiled, covered or protected him. جن means, the darkness of night or its intense darkness; such beings as keep aloof from the people as if remaining concealed, *i.e.* big people (Lane). Jinn in the present verse may represent mountain or wild people who had not till then been subjugated.

Commentary :

The verse under comment should be read along with 21 : 83; 34 : 13 & 38 : 38. It seems to refer to the military personnel of Solomon's army. The three words جن (jinn), انس (men) and طير (birds) may represent three departments of his army. In the present verse and in 34 : 13, the word جن (jinn) has been used to represent a particular section of the army while in 21 : 83 & 38 : 38, the word شياطين has been used to represent the same class. It seems that Solomon had subdued and subjugated some wild tribes, this approximately being the sense of both the words جن and شياطين who formed an integral part of his army and did sundry other difficult tasks for him.

19. Until when they came to the Valley of Al-Naml, a Namlite said, 'O ye Naml, enter your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you, while they know not.'²⁸²⁵

كَتَمَ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا
النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ
وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ①٩

The word طير denoting swift-footed horses may represent Solomon's cavalry. This meaning of the word finds corroboration in 38 : 32-34 where Solomon has been stated to possess great love for horses. Thus whereas جن (jinn) and انس (men) represented two sections of Solomon's infantry, طير (birds) stood for his cavalry. But if طير may be taken to mean 'birds' then it would signify birds which Solomon employed for carrying messages. Thus they also formed a very useful and necessary adjunct to his army.

But these three words may also have been used in a metaphorical sense signifying respectively "big men," "ordinary men" and "highly spiritual men." In this sense of the words the verse would mean that while on military expeditions Solomon had all these three classes of men with him because they all had their usefulness.

2825. Commentary :

وَادِ النَّمْلِ (Naml) being a proper noun, (the valley of Naml) does not mean the valley of ants as is generally misunderstood but the valley where a tribe named Naml lived. In Qamūs under the word برق we have مِيَاهُ النَّمْلَةِ i.e. Abriqa is one of the springs of Namlah. So Naml is the name of a tribe just as Māzin (مازين) which means the eggs of ants is the name of an Arab tribe. In Arabia it was not an uncommon practice that tribes were named after animals and beasts such as Banū

Asad, Banū Taghlab, Banū Kalb, Banū Naml, etc. Moreover, the use of the words ادخلوا (enter) and مَسَاكِنَكُمْ (your habitations) in the verse lends powerful support to the view that Naml was a tribe, since the former word is used only for rational beings and the expression مَسَاكِنَكُمْ (your habitations) has been used in the Qur'ān exclusively for human habitations (29 : 39 ; 32 : 27). Thus نَمْلَةٌ means a person of the tribe of النمل ; a Namlite. The said Namlite was possibly their leader and had ordered the people to get out of the way of the army of Solomon and enter their houses.

According to some authorities this valley is situated between Jibrīn and 'Asqalān. 'Asqalān is a town on the sea-coast, twelve miles to the north of Gaz, near Sinai (Taqwīm al-Buldān). Jibrīn is a town in the north, situated in the vilayat of Damascus. This shows that the Valley of Naml is situated near the sea-coast, opposite to or near Jerusalem, lying on the route from Damascus to Hijāz, at a distance of about a hundred miles from it. This part of the country was up to the time of Solomon inhabited by the Arabs and the Midianites. (See ancient and modern maps of Syria and Palestine). According to other authorities, however, it is situated in Yemen. This latter view seems to be more akin to reality. In view of this historical fact fabulous legends woven round this valley are mere conjectures

20. Thereupon he smiled, laughing at her words, and said, 'My Lord, grant me *the will and power* to be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do *such* good works as would please Thee, and admit me, by Thy mercy, among Thy righteous servants.'²⁸²⁶

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي
أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ
وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ
فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ②٠

21. And he reviewed the birds, and said, 'How is it that I do not see Hudhud? Is he among the absentees?'²⁸²⁷

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ
أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ ②١

of the Commentators of the Qur'ān. The simple fact seems to be that while on a military expedition to Saba' Solomon might have passed by the valley where the tribe called Namlah lived.

It further appears from the verse that the piety and godliness of Solomon's soldiers was famed far and wide. They would not knowingly harm or injure any people. This seems to be the implication of the words "and they knew not" and this is what pleased Solomon as is clear from the next verse.

2826. Important Words :

ضاحكا (laughed) is derived from ضحك which means, he laughed; he wondered; he was frightened. ضحكت المرأة means, the woman menstruated. ضحكت الطريق means, the way became clear. ضحكت الارض عن النبات means, the land brought forth its herbage (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11 : 72.

Commentary :

The entire wording of the verse shows that Solomon was extremely pleased with the good

opinion a Namlite expressed about his own and that of his army's power and piety. The implication in this account of Solomon is that rising from quite insignificant beginnings, the Holy Prophet will attain such prestige and power that he would be feared far and wide. The Prophet himself is reported to have said : نصرت بالرعب مسيرة شهر i.e. I have been helped with such prestige that people fear me from a distance of one month's journey (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-jihād*).

2827. Important Words :

تفقد (he reviewed) is derived from فقد. They say فقهه i.e. he found it not; he lost it, it was or became absent from him. الفقد which is noun-infinitive, though often used as meaning being non-existent, properly signifies the thing's being absent from the range of perception by sense so that its place is not known. تفقده means, he sought for or after it; or did so leisurely or repeatedly; or sought for or after it, it being absent from him, or he sought or sought leisurely or repeatedly to obtain knowledge of it, having known it before (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

22. 'I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or I will slay him, unless he bring me a clear reason *for his absence*.'

لُعِدَّ بَنُوهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَا أَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ

لِيَأْتِيَنِي سُلْطَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. And he did not tarry long *before Hudhud came* and said, 'I have comprehended that which thou hast not comprehended; and I have come to thee from Saba' with sure tidings.²⁸²⁸

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ مَحْظُ بِهِ

وَحِجَّتُكَ مِنْ سَبَأٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Commentary :

Contrary to popular belief based on fable and fiction "Hudhud" was not the name of a bird which Solomon employed as his message-bearer. This is clear from the following facts mentioned in the present and the next few verses.

(1) It is inconceivable that a great Divine Prophet and a mighty monarch like Solomon should have been so angry with a little bird as to be prepared to inflict severe punishment upon it or even to kill it if it did not give clear reason for its absence. Birds are not subject to the penalties of law (v. 22).

(2) The hoopoe or "Hudhud" is not a migratory bird. It cannot fly long distances. Solomon, therefore, could not have selected it for a journey to Sheba and back (v. 23).

(3) The bird also seems to be acquainted with the requirements of a State and with kings and thrones as is clear from the report he made to Solomon, viz., that the Queen of Sheba had been given all that was needed for carrying on the government of her country (v. 24).

(4) Surprisingly, the bird seems to be well-versed in knowledge about Divine Unity and the evils of associating gods with Allah (vv. 25, 26).

It quite clearly follows from these facts that "Hudhud" was not a bird but a man, even a very responsible officer of State who had been entrusted with an important political mission by Solomon to the Queen of Sheba. The practice of exchange of envoys seems to be quite popular in Solomon's time. It is also a known fact that men are named after birds and animals. "Hudhud" appears to be a very popular name among Solomon's people. The word seems to be the Arabicised form of Hudad, a Biblical name. It appears to have been the name of several Edomite kings who ruled immediately before the first Israelite king and who defeated Midian. One of the courtiers of Solomon was also named Hudhud. A son of Ishmael, too, bore this name. Similarly, an Edomite prince who fled to Egypt for fear of Jacob's massacre was known by this name (1. Kings 11 : 14). The name appeared to be so popular and is so frequently used in the Old Testament that when mentioned without a qualifying word it means, "a man of the Edomite family" (Jew Enc.). According to Muntaha al-Arab "Hudhud" was the name of the father of Bilqīs, the Queen of Sheba.

2828. Commentary :

It appears from this verse that "Hudhud" was sent on an important State mission and he

24. 'I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given everything and she has a mighty throne ; ²⁸²⁹

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝٢٣

25. 'I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah; "and Satan has made their works look beautiful to them, and has thus hindered them from the *right* way, so that they follow not guidance; ²⁸³⁰

وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ۝٢٤

26. 'And Satan has bidden them not to worship Allah, Who brings to light that which is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and ^bWho knows what you conceal and what you make known.

إِلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۝٢٥

^a8 : 49; 16 : 64; 35 : 9.

^b2 : 78; 16 : 20 ; 64 : 5.

brought for Solomon an important piece of news. A rising seemed to have taken place in that region and Solomon marched with his army to quell it and he sent "Hudhud" in advance to collect all necessary information with regard to the real state of affairs obtaining there.

Saba' may be identified with Sheba of the Bible (1 Kings 10). It was a city in Yemen situated at about three days' journey from the city of Ṣan'ā and was the seat of Government of Queen of Sheba. Moreover, Saba' is a well-known branch of the Qaḥṭānī tribes.

2829. **Commentary :**

"Hudhud" proceeds to give detailed information about the place against which Solomon was marching. The words, "she has been given everything," show that Queen of Sheba ruled over a very prosperous people who had attained very high degree of civilization. She

possessed all those things which had made her a powerful monarch.

2830. **Commentary :**

The Sabaeans worshipped the sun and the stars, a creed which in all likelihood had been imported into Yemen from Iraq with which the people of Yemen were in close contact by way of the sea and the Persian Gulf. The Sabaeans should not be confounded with Sabians who have been mentioned in 2 : 63, 5 : 70 & 22 : 18 and have been variously described as (1) a star worshipping people living in Iraq ; (2) a people believing in a Faith which was a sort of patchwork of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism; (3) a people who lived near Mosul in Iraq and believed in the Unity of God but possessed no known *Shari'at*, and (4) a people who lived round about Iraq and professed beliefs in all Divine Prophets.

27. 'Allah! there is no god but He, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.'

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ٢٧

28. *Solomon* said, 'We shall see whether thou hast spoken the truth or whether thou art one of those who lie.'²⁸³¹

قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ٢٨

29. 'Go thou, with this letter of mine, and lay it before them; then withdraw from them and see what answer they return.'²⁸³²

إِذْ هَبْ بِكُتُبِي هَذَا فَأَلْقِهَا إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ٢٩

30. *The Queen* said, "Ye chiefs, there has been delivered to me a noble letter,

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ ٣٠

31. "It is from Solomon, and it is: 'In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful';²⁸³³

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٣١

2831. Commentary :

Birds are never known to speak the truth or tell lies. The verse affords yet one more proof of "Hudhud" being not a bird but an important official in Solomon's government.

2832. Commentary :

In the words, "then withdraw from them," "Hudhud" had been taught proper etiquette which he had to observe while presenting Solomon's letter to the Queen.

Even if it be conceded that David and Solomon could understand the language of birds, there is nothing in the Qur'ān to show that the Queen of Sheba also understood their language and yet "Hudhud" was entrusted with the mission to take Solomon's letter to her and to have a talk with her on Solomon's behalf and as his representative.

2833. Commentary :

Some Christian Orientalists, as is their wont, have vainly sought to impugn the Divine

origin of the Qur'ān by trying to show that the expression *Bismillah* has been borrowed from earlier Scriptures. Wherry in his "Commentary" says that it has been borrowed from Zend-Avesta.

Sale has expressed an identical view, while Rodwell is of the opinion that Pre-Islamic Arabs borrowed it from Jews and subsequently it was incorporated in the Qur'ān by the Holy Prophet. To say that because this expression was to be found in some former Scriptures, therefore it must have necessarily been borrowed from one of them by the Qur'ān does not stand to reason. According to Muslim belief Prophets were raised among every people (35 : 25) and those Prophets like the Holy Prophet of Islam also received Divine revelation and therefore there can be, and there actually are to be, found in the Qur'ān expressions of identical import with those in other Divine Scriptures. This fact, if anything, only proves that the Qur'ān has originated from the same Source from Which those Scriptures had originated. In the verse under

32. 'Behave not proudly towards me, but come to me in submission,'²⁸³⁴

أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ عَلَىٰ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ۝٣٢

3 33. She said, 'Ye chiefs, advise me in the matter that is before me. I never decide any matter until you are present with me and give me your advice.'

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرٍ مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشْهَدُونِ ۝٣٣

34. They replied, 'We possess power and we possess great prowess in war, but it is for thee to command; therefore consider thou what thou wilt command.'²⁸³⁵

قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَوْلُوا قُوَّةً وَأُولُوا بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ ۝٣٤
الْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانْظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ ۝٣٥

comment the expression *Bismillah* is shown to have been used by Prophet Solomon. So there can be no question of its being borrowed or plagiarized by the Qur'ān. What the Qur'ān claims is only this that no other Scripture has used this expression in the form and manner in which it has done. And the charge is also belied by facts of history that the Holy Prophet took this expression from Pre-Islamic Arabs. The Arabs had never used it before it was revealed in the Qur'ān. On the contrary, they had a special aversion for the use of the Divine attribute *Al-Rahmān* (25 : 61) which forms an integral part of *Bismillah*. See also 1 : 1.

at once a warning against the futility of revolt which seemed to be then raising its head in some parts of the country and an invitation to the Queen to submit to Solomon to avoid unnecessary bloodshed and also to give up idolatry and accept the true Faith.

2835. **Commentary :**

The verse shows that the Queen of Sheba was a very powerful monarch and possessed great material resources and also commanded the affection, co-operation and willing obedience of her subjects and was the final arbiter of their destinies.

2834. **Commentary :**

Solomon's letter constitutes a beautiful specimen of how great and comprehensive meaning can be condensed in a few brief words devoid of all useless bombast and verbosity. The letter was

The power and glory of Saba' was at its height in about 1100 B.C. The period of the Queen's rule continued up to 950 B.C., when she is believed to have submitted to Solomon. With her submission was fulfilled the Biblical prophecy, viz., "the Kings of Sheba and Saba' shall offer gifts" (Psalms 72 : 10).

35. She said, 'Surely, kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and turn the highest of its people into the lowest. And thus will they do.'²⁸³⁶

36. 'But I am going to send them a present and wait to see what *answer* the envoys bring back.'

37. So when *the Queen's ambassador* came to Solomon, he said, 'Do you mean to help me with *your* wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you. Nay, but you rejoice in your gift.'²⁸³⁷

38. 'Go back to them, for we shall surely come to them with hosts against which they will have no power, and we shall drive them out from there disgraced, and they will be humbled.'²⁸³⁸

قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَ

جَعَلُوا أَعْدَاءَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَأَرْسَلْتُ مُرْسِلَةً إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَظَرُوهُ بِمَا يَرْجِعُ

الرُّسُلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَنُ قَالَ أُنِيدُ وَنِنِ بِنَالٍ فَمَا أَتَيْنِ

اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا أَتَيْتُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

ارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا

وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِنْهَا أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

2836. Commentary :

The Queen explains to her ministers and nobles the dangers of offering opposition to Solomon.

2837. Commentary :

Solomon seems evidently to have become greatly offended with the Queen's behaviour in sending him presents which seemed to include a throne. He took it as an insult. He had demanded her unconditional surrender and instead was presented with paltry presents. The Sabaeans had either attacked Solomon's territory or had sought to create unrest in it.

This is why the sending of presents offended and annoyed him. In ordinary circumstances, as a righteous man of God, he should have been pleased with the presents.

2838. Important Words :

قبل (power) is derived from قبل (qabala). They say قبل على الشيء i.e. he took to the thing and stuck to it. قبل المكان means, he came to the place. قبل (qibalun) means, side, direction, presence; power, strength, authority. They say ما لي به قبل i.e. there is no power for me against him, أتاني من قبله means, he came to me from his presence or his direction (Aqrab).

39. He said, 'O nobles, which of you will bring me a throne for her before they come to me, submitting?'²⁸³⁹

قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُوْا أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ
يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Said a stalwart from among the Jinn: 'I will bring it to thee before thou risest from thy camp ; and indeed I possess power therefor *and I am* trustworthy.'²⁸⁴⁰

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
تَقُومَ مِنْ مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

2839. Commentary :

عرشها (a throne for her) signifies the throne which Solomon had ordered to be built for the Queen in accordance with the custom of the day. It seemed to be a practice in vogue at that time that when the ruler of a State paid a visit to another ruler, a throne was built for the reception of the royal guest. Solomon also ordered a throne to be built for the reception of the Queen. It is called 'her throne' because it was specially built for her use.

The expression يَأْتِينِي (will bring me) means, will prepare for me.

2840. Important Words :

عِفْرِيت (stalwart) is derived from عَفَرَ. They say عَفَرَهُ i.e. he covered him with dust; he threw him on the ground. عَفَرَهُ ('affara) means, he humbled or abased him. عَفْرِيت is a word which

is used for men, the jinn and the devils and means, (1) strong and powerful; (2) sharp, vigorous and effective in an affair, exceeding ordinary bounds therein with intelligence and sagacity; (3) a chief; (4) evil in disposition and malignant; (5) insolent and audacious in pride, and in acts of rebellion and (6) one who rolls his adversary in the dust (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words, "I possess power therefor and I am trustworthy," indicate that the said 'ifrit' was a very high official who wielded great authority and was therefore quite confident of carrying out the orders of his master to his entire satisfaction within the time allotted to him.

The words مَقَامِكَ (thy camp) signify the place where Solomon had encamped on his way to Saba' and was waiting for his envoys to come back with the reply to his letter to the Queen of Sheba.

41. Said one who had knowledge of the book, 'I will bring it to thee before thy noble messenger returns to thee.' And when he saw it set before him, he said, 'This is by the grace of my Lord, that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whosoever is grateful is grateful for the good of his own soul; but whosoever is ungrateful, truly my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous.'²⁸⁴¹

قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ
قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ
قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ
أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّا لَنَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٤١﴾

2841. Important Words :

طَرْفُكَ (thy noble messenger) is infinitive noun from طَرَفَ (ṭarafa). They say طَرَفَ فلان *i.e.* such a one saw. طَرَفَ عَيْنُهُ means, his eyes moved in order to see. طَرَفَ means, the extremity or end of anything; eye, look, glance, blinking; a noble or generous man in respect of ancestry; government revenue; a messenger from Yemen. كَرِيمَ الطَّرَفَيْنِ means, noble in respect of both father and mother. اطراف الارض means, the noble or exalted and the learned men of the earth. اطراف الناس means, the lower orders of the people. على طرف means, beside, aside or apart (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The phrase قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ may mean, (1) before thy messenger from Yemen returns to thee; (2) before the nobleman whom thou hast sent comes back to thee from Yemen; (3) in the twinkling of an eye, *i.e.* in a very short time; (4) before the government revenue is deposited in the treasury. In the last-mentioned meaning of طَرَفَ the expression would mean, "I would need no more money, the money already in the

government treasury would be quite sufficient to meet the expenses of constructing a throne for the queen."

The expression "who had knowledge of the book" seems to refer to one who knew the intricacies of finance. He might be Solomon's finance minister.

In this and the previous verse two offers to make the throne for Solomon have been mentioned, one by the 'Ifrit' who offered to prepare the throne before Solomon had raised his camp and started back, and the other by "the man who had knowledge." The latter made a still better offer of finishing the throne before Solomon's messenger came back with the reply to his letter from the Queen. The context shows that Solomon accepted the second offer because he wanted to have the throne finished before the Queen came to pay her respects to him as he was to stay at that place till she had come and the whole ceremony was over. The verse also implies that all sorts of men were employed by Solomon—men of knowledge and experience, skilled and unskilled labourers, craftsmen and technicians.

42. He said, 'Make her throne unrecognizable to her, and let us see whether she follows the right way or whether she is *one* of those who follow not the right way.'²⁸⁴²

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

43. And when she came, it was said *to her*, 'Is thy throne like this?' She replied, It is as though it were the same. And we had been given knowledge before this, and we have already submitted.'²⁸⁴³

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكِ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ
وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

44. And that which she used to worship beside Allah had stopped her *from believing*; for she came of a disbelieving people.

وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا
كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

2842. Important Words :

نَكَّرُوا (make unrecognizable) is the transitive form of نَكَرَ (nakira). نَكَرَ الرَّجُلُ means, he did not know the man or did not recognize him. نَكَرَهُ (nakkara) means, he changed it so as to render it unrecognizable. تَنَكَرَ الرَّجُلُ means, the man became unrecognizable. تَنَكَرَ لِفُلَانٍ means, he became estranged from such a one. (Aqrab). See also 16 : 91.

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that Solomon ordered the official who was entrusted with the task of preparing the throne for the Queen to make it so beautiful that she might realize the superiority of its workmanship and come to dislike her own throne and thus should understand that Solomon's power and resources were much greater and superior to those of her's. This seems to be the significance of the sentence, "whether she follows the right way." Solomon

sought to bring home to her the futility of any opposition or resistance to him. She and her ministers and courtiers seemed to be proud of their power and resources (27 : 34) and Solomon wanted to disabuse their minds of this misconception (27 : 37).

If the words "her throne" be taken to mean the throne which, it is said, the Queen may have sent as a present to Solomon, the words نَكَّرُوا would mean that the throne should be so embellished and made beautiful and the figures of idols on it, if any, should be so completely wiped off that she might not recognize it.

2843. Commentary :

The words, "We had been given knowledge before this," signify that the Queen had already become conversant with the great power and resources of Solomon and had made up her mind to give her allegiance to him.

45. It was said to her, 'Enter the palace.' And when she saw it, she thought it to be a great expanse of water, and she uncovered her shanks. *Solomon* said, 'It is a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass.' She said, 'My Lord, I have indeed wronged my soul; and I submit myself with *Solomon* to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'²⁸⁴⁴

قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً
وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّدٌ
مِّن قَوَارِيرِهِ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْمَكْتُ
مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨٤٤﴾

2844. Important Words :

كشفت عن ساقها (she uncovered her shanks) ساق (*sāqun*) is derived from ساق (*sāqa*). ساق means, leg ; shank ; the part between ankle and knee. ساق الشجر means, the trunk of the tree. The Arabs say, كشف الامر عن ساقه i.e. the affair became distressful. الكشف عن الساق is a well-known Arabic idiom meaning to become prepared to meet the difficulty or to become perturbed or perplexed. قامت الحرب على ساق means, the battle became vehement. كشف عن ساقيه literally meaning he uncovered his shanks signifies, he prepared himself to meet the difficulty; he became perplexed. The expression كشف عن ساقها would thus mean: (1) she uncovered her shanks; (2) she got ready to meet the situation; (3) she became perturbed or perplexed (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Solomon wanted the Queen to give up idol-worship and accept the true Faith. For this purpose he wisely adopted such means as should have led the noble and sagacious lady to see the error of her ways. The throne which *Solomon* caused to be prepared for her was also prepared with this end in view. It was made much more beautiful and in every respect superior to her

own throne of which she was very proud. *Solomon* did so in order that she might realize that he was God's favourite and had been endowed with material and spiritual gifts in far greater abundance than those given to her. The palace referred to in the verse was also constructed with the same object in view. As the verse shows, the entrance to the palace was paved with slabs of glass, below which ran a stream of crystal clear water. When the Queen entered the palace she mistook the transparent glass for water and uncovered her shanks, which in view of the Arabic expression كشف عن ساقها signifies that the sight of the water perplexed her and she did not know what to do. By this device *Solomon* directed her attention to the fact that as she had mistaken the slabs of glass for water, similarly the sun and other celestial bodies which she worshipped were not the real source of light. They only emitted light but were lifeless things. It was Almighty God Who had bestowed upon them the light which they emitted. In this way *Solomon* succeeded in the object he had in view. The noble lady made a confession of her error and from a worshipper of idols of wood and stone she became a devoted votary of the One True God. It is regrettable that superstition and gross credulity have caused men of weak faith to give the homage which is due to the Great

- 4 46. "And 'We sent to Thamūd their brother Ṣāliḥ *who said*, 'Worship Allah.' And behold, they became two parties contending with each other."²⁸⁴⁵

47. He said, 'O, my people, why do you wish to hasten on the evil rather than the good? ^bWherefore do you not ask forgiveness of Allah that you may be shown mercy?'²⁸⁴⁶

48. They said, 'We augur evil of thee and of those that are with thee.' He said, '*The cause of your evil fortune is with Allah. Nay, but you are a people who are on trial.*'²⁸⁴⁷

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَيْنِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

قَالَ يَقُومُ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ
لَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبَيْنَ مَعَكَ قَالَ طَّيَّرَكُمْ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَفْتَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a7 : 74; 11 : 62; 26 : 142; 54 : 24. ^b27 : 47.

Invisible God to helpless creatures and lifeless material objects.

It is one of the characteristics of the Qur'ān that whereas the Bible has maligned and defamed the Prophets of God, it (the Qur'ān) has exonerated and cleared them of all sins, filthy accusations and aspersions cast upon them by the Bible.

Solomon is one of those Israelite Prophets whom the Bible has perhaps calumniated and slandered most. The Qur'ān has taken special care to exculpate him of all slanders and calumnies. The Bible says of Solomon that his wives had "turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11 : 4) and that "the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, God of Israel" (1 Kings 11 : 9). The Qur'ān contradicts these blasphemous charges and says in the present verse that the Queen of Sheba gave up idolatry and came over to the true Faith through the noble efforts of

Solomon and that he himself was "a most excellent servant of God and turned to Him again and again" (38 : 31).

2845. **Commentary :**

This and the following several verses deal with the Prophets Ṣāliḥ and Lot. The relevancy of discussion about them here is that their peoples lived on the trade-route from Hījāz to Syria and the Arabs were well conversant with them.

2846. **Commentary :**

Such has always been the way of disbelievers that instead of benefiting by the respite that is granted to them, they become all the more arrogant, and misconstruing the delay as an argument against their Prophet, demand the speedy coming of the threatened Divine punishment.

2847. **Important Words :**

For اطَّيَّرْنَا and طَّيَّرَكُمْ see 3 : 50; 7 : 132; 17 : 14 & 27 : 18.

49. And there were in the city a party of nine *persons* "who made mischief in the land, and would not reform."²⁸⁴⁸

وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. They said, "Swear one to another by Allah that we will surely attack him and his family by night, and then we will say to his heir, 'We witnessed not the destruction of his family, and most surely we are truthful.'"²⁸⁴⁹

قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ
لَوْ لِيهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

426 : 153.

2848. Important Words :

رَهْط (party) is derived from (*rahata*) which means, he took large bits; he devoured greedily. ارْتَهَطَ الْقَوْمُ means, the people assembled. رَهْط means, a man's people or tribe consisting of his near relations or kinsfolk; a number of men less than ten among whom there is no woman; or a number of men from three to ten or from seven to ten (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

By implication the reference in the verse is to the enemies of the Holy Prophet, prominent among whom were nine persons. Eight of them were killed in the Battle of Badr and the ninth, the notorious Abū Lahab, died at Mecca on hearing of the news of the defeat at Badr. The eight were: Abū Jahl, Muṭ'im bin 'Adiyy, Shaibah bin Rabī'ah, 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah, Walīd bin 'Utbah, Ummayah bin Khalf, Naḍar bin Harth and 'Aqbah bin Abī Mu'ait. All these men nine conspired to murder the Holy Prophet. The actual plan to select one man from every

tribe of the Quraish and then make a concerted murderous attack upon the Holy Prophet so that no particular tribe might be held responsible for his murder came from Abū Jahl, the leader of this wicked junta.

The present *Sūra* was revealed towards the middle of the Meccan period and the plot against the Holy Prophet matured just before his departure for Medina. Thus mention of such a plot in the account of Prophet Ṣāliḥ implied a prophetic reference to a similar plot against the Holy Prophet at a later date. A reference to the plot against the Holy Prophet has also been made in 8 : 31. See next verse.

2849. Important Words :

لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ (We will surely attack him by night) is derived from بَاتَ. They say بَاتَ فِي الْمَكَانِ i.e. he passed the night in the place. بَاتَ الْبَيْتَ (bayyata) means, he performed the thing at night. بَاتَ الْعَدُوَّ means, he came upon the enemy suddenly, took him by surprise, attacked him by night or at night (Lane & Aqrab).

51. ^aAnd they planned a plan, and We *also* planned a plan, but they perceived *it* not.²⁸⁵⁰

وَمَكْرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكْرْنَا مَكْرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52. ^bThen see how *evil* was the end of their plan! Verily, We utterly destroyed them and their people all together.²⁸⁵¹

فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَا دَمَرْنَاهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And yonder are their houses fallen down, because of their wrongdoing. In that *verily* is a Sign for a people who have knowledge.

فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And We saved those who believed and feared God.

وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. ^cAnd We sent Lot as a Messenger, when he said to his people, 'Do you commit abomination while you see *the evil thereof*?'

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. ^d'What! do you approach men lustfully rather than women? Nay, you are indeed an ignorant people.'

أَيَنْتَكُمُ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ
بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

^a3 : 55 ; 8 : 31 ; 13 : 43 ; 14 : 47. ^b7 : 79; 11 : 68; ^c7 : 81; 29 : 29. ^d7 : 82; 26 : 166-167; 29 : 30.

2850. Commentary :

Like Ṣāliḥ's people the Meccan chiefs plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet as mentioned in 27:49 above. And like the plot against Ṣāliḥ, the plot against the Holy Prophet proved abortive. Ultimately it led to their own ruin. The Holy Prophet had to flee from Mecca but the flight eventually resulted in the destruction of the power of the Quraish. The Quraish did not

realize that by compelling the Holy Prophet to flee from Mecca they were laying the foundation of their own destruction.

2851. Commentary :

The end of the plottings of the Meccan chiefs against the Holy Prophet as referred to above was that they themselves met with complete discomfiture and destruction.

57. But the answer of his people was naught save that they said, "Drive out Lot's family from your city. They are a people who would keep clean"²⁸⁵²

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُو آلَ
لُوطٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. ^bSo We saved him and his family, except his wife; her We decreed to be of those who stayed behind.

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَّرُهَا مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. ^cAnd We rained upon them a rain; and evil was the rain *that descended upon* those who had been warned.

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

R. 5 60. Say, "All praise belongs to Allah, and peace be upon those servants of His whom He has chosen. Is Allah better or what they associate *with Him*?"²⁸⁵³

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ
اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ أَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

^a7 : 83; 26 : 168.

^b7 : 84; 21 : 75; 29 : 34.

^c7 : 85; 25 : 41; 26 : 174.

^d37 : 182-183.

2852. Important Words :

يطهرون (would keep clean) is derived from طهر which means, he was or became clean. طهر الشيء (tahhara) means, he made the thing clean with water, he washed the thing. يطهرون is from ياب تفعل which is generally used to imply affectation. The word was used by the opponents of Lot ironically and by way of taunt, meaning that his family and people posed and paraded as extra pure and righteous persons. Sometimes man sinks so low in sin and vice that he becomes lost to all sense of decency and even the voice of conscience becomes stilled in him

and he exults in crimes and instead of being ashamed of his own wicked deeds he makes taunting and sarcastic remarks against good people. So did the people of Lot.

2853. Commentary :

With this verse is closed the discourse about Moses, David, Solomon, Ṣāliḥ and Lot with an invocation of Divine peace and blessings on God's Messengers and His Elect to whom humanity is indebted for all that is good and virtuous in the world, and then the *Sūra* proceeds to give arguments in support of the existence of God, His great power and Unity.

61. Or, Who created the heavens and the earth, and "Who sent down water for you from the sky where-with We cause to grow beautiful orchards? You could not cause their trees to grow. Is there a god besides Allah? Nay, ^bthey are a people who deviate from the right path.²⁸⁵⁴

62. Or, "Who made the earth a place of rest, and placed rivers in its midst, and placed upon it firm mountains, and ^dput a barrier between the two waters? Is there a god besides Allah? Nay, most of them know not.²⁸⁵⁵

63. Or, "Who answers the distressed person when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil, ^fand makes you Successors in the earth? Is there a god besides Allah? Little is it that you reflect.²⁸⁵⁶

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ
مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا ؕ إِلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ
بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَعِدُونَ ۝٦١

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا
وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِي وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا
ءِ إِلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٦٢

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ
وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ؕ إِلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا
مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝٦٣

^a31 : 11; 50 : 10. ^b6 : 2. ^c20 : 54; 78:7. ^d25 : 54; 55 : 20-21. ^e21 : 187; 7 : 56. ^f10 : 15.

2854. Commentary :

The first argument in favour of the subject introduced in the preceding verse is taken from nature—from the creation of heavens and earth, from the coming down of rain and the life it gives to the dead earth and from mountains and rivers. All these things point to the existence of a great Divine Being Who is One and unique in His marvellous powers and attributes.

2855. Commentary :

The argument begun in the preceding verse is here further developed and expanded. For an explanation of the expression "and put a barrier between the two waters" see 25 : 54.

2856. Commentary :

This verse gives the second argument in support of God's existence, His great and unlimited powers and Unity. It purports to say that as God's great powers are manifested in the marvellous working of the laws of nature, so are they manifested in man's inner conscience when he cries to God in the agony of his soul and God listens to his cry. The acceptance of prayers which is the pith and kernel of all religious belief constitutes one of the most important arguments to prove the existence of God. If man had not witnessed great miracles being performed in all ages through the acceptance of prayers by God of His dear ones, he would have justifiably ceased to believe in God's existence.

64. Or, Who guides you in every *kind* of darkness of the land and of the sea, and Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy? Is there a god besides Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him.²⁸⁵⁷

65. Or, ^aWho originates creation, and then repeats it ^band Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Is there a god besides Allah? Say, 'Bring forward your proof if you are truthful.'^{2857A}

66. Say, "None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen save Allah; and they do not know when they will be raised up."²⁸⁵⁸

أَمَّنْ يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ
الريِّحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ
تَعَلَّوْا اللَّهَ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

أَمَّنْ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ
قُلْتُمْ صٰدِقِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

^a10 : 35; 29 : 20; 30 : 12,28. ^b10 : 32; 34 : 25; 35 : 4. ^c11 : 124; 16 : 78; 35 : 39.

The words, "Who answers the distressed when he calls upon Him," may also refer to the extremely weak and distressed state of the Companions of the Holy Prophet when in their agony they prayed to God and He heard their prayers. The words, "and makes you Successors in the earth," lend support to this inference inasmuch as they implied a prophecy that the weak and distressed Muslims would one day become rulers in the land in which at that time there was no security and safety for them.

2857. Commentary :

It is significant that when the word ريح (wind) is used in the singular number in the Qur'ān, it generally signifies Divine punishment (17 : 70; 54:20; 69:7, etc.), but when it is used in the plural number it generally signifies Divine blessings, particularly the advent of a heavenly Messenger.

In the present and the preceding verses three

kinds of argument and evidence have been adduced to prove the existence and Unity of God—evidence from external nature, man's inner self and from his collective life.

2857A. Commentary :

The words, "originates creation and then repeats it," signify creation and procreation.

2858. Commentary :

Another invincible argument in favour of the theme dealt with in the preceding verses is embodied in the verse under comment, viz., that God alone knows the unseen in the heavens and the earth. The fact that the possession of knowledge of the unknown is the sole prerogative of God is established by the knowledge of the unknown which He vouchsafes to His Messengers and His righteous servants, instances of which are to be witnessed in every age among the true followers of Islam.

67. Nay, their knowledge respecting the Hereafter has reached its end, nay, they are *indeed* in doubt about it; nay, they are blind to it.^{2858A}

بَلِ ادْرَاكِ عَلَيْهِمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ قَبْلُ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ
مِنْهَا قَبْلُ هُمْ مِنْهَا عَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

6 68. "And those who disbelieve say, 'What! when we and our fathers have become dust, shall we indeed be brought forth *again*?²⁸⁵⁹

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا وَآبَاءُنَا آيَاتًا
لَنُخْرِجَنَّ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. "We were surely promised this before—we and our fathers; this is nothing but tales of the ancients."

لَقَدْ وَعِدْنَا هَٰذَا نَحْنُ وَآبَاءُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ
هَٰذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

^a13 : 6 ; 37: 17 ; 50 : 4. ^b23 : 84.

The words "when they will be raised up" may also mean "when their resurrection as a great nation will take place?"

2858A. Important Words :

ادراك (has reached its end) is derived from درك المطر (*darraka*) i.e. the rain dropped with close consecutiveness. أدركه means, he attained, reached or overtook him. ادراكوا or تداركوا means, they attained, reached, overtook one another so as the last of them met with the first of them. بل ادراك علمهم في الآخرة means, their knowledge with regard to the meeting of the Hereafter has reached its end i.e. they have become devoid of knowledge about it. See also 7 : 39.

Commentary :

No amount of human knowledge and intelligence alone can satisfy the craving of the human soul after God, or can prove beyond doubt the existence of God and life after death, the two

most fundamental of all religious beliefs, because their full comprehension is beyond human ken. It is Divine knowledge acquired through Divine revelation that can and does actually engender certainty in human mind about these two basic religious problems. Man's knowledge can, at best, lead to the conclusion that there must be a Divine Being and a life after death but it is Divine revelation alone that can change this "must be" into a certain "is."

2859. Commentary :

This and the next few verses deal with a worn-out and hackneyed objection of disbelievers about life after death. It further says that these people—the Arabs, have completely despaired of their future. They do not believe that the appearance of the Holy Prophet will raise them from a degraded and corrupt people into a living nation and therefore instead of accepting him, they oppose him.

70. Say, "Travel in the earth and see how *evil* was the end of the sinful!"²⁸⁶⁰

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ

الْجَائِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

71. ^bAnd grieve thou not for them, nor be thou in distress because of what they plan.

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

72. ^cAnd they say, 'When will this promise be *fulfilled*, if you are truthful!'²⁸⁶¹

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

73. Say, 'It may be that ^aa part of that which you would hasten on may be close behind you.'²⁸⁶²

قُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ رَدِفَ لَكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي

تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

^a16 : 37 ; 30:43 ; 40 : 83.

^b15 : 89 ; 16 : 128.

^c10 : 49 ; 21 : 39 ; 34 : 30 ; 36 : 49.

^d22 : 48 ; 26 : 205 ; 29 : 55.

2860. Commentary :

In this verse the disbelievers are warned that they will not be allowed to arrest or retard the progress of the Holy Prophet's noble cause; on the contrary, by opposing him they will only bring ruin upon themselves. The lesson is writ large on the pages of history that denial of truth has always led disbelievers to destruction and desolation. In the next verse the Holy Prophet is consoled and comforted that he should not feel distressed because of the plots and conspiracies of his enemies, as their evil designs can do him no harm and will only recoil on their own heads.

2861. Commentary :

The disbelievers tauntingly ask the Holy Prophet not to refer to what had happened to

other peoples in the past but to "let us know when the punishment about which you hold out to us a threat will overtake us."

2862. Commentary :

To the challenge of disbelievers referred to in the preceding verse as to when the promise about the departure of their glory and greatness will be fulfilled, they are told that a part of it will be fulfilled very soon. At another place in the Qur'ān it is stated that the promise of punishment to the disbelievers will be fulfilled within a year after the Holy Prophet's flight from Mecca when "the glory of Kedar (Quraish) shall depart" (34 : 31).

74. And, truly, "thy Lord is gracious to mankind, but most of them are not grateful.^{2862A}

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

75. ^bAnd surely, thy Lord knows what their bosoms conceal and what they reveal.²⁸⁶³

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

76. And there is nothing hidden in the heaven and the earth, but it is recorded in a clear Book.

وَمَا مِنْ غَائِبَةٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

77. Verily, this Qur'ān explains to the Children of Israel most of that concerning which they differ.²⁸⁶⁴

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَفْصُّ عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

78. And verily, it is a guidance and a mercy to the believers.

وَإِنَّهُ لَهْدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

^a10 : 61 ; 40 : 62. 2 : 78 ; 16 : 24 ; 28 : 70 ; 36 : 77 ; 40 : 20.

2862A. Commentary :

To the demand for punishment made by disbelievers and mentioned in v. 72 above, the present and the preceding verse constitute a befitting answer. The preceding verse purported to say that the disbelievers will soon receive Divine punishment but it will not be a devastating and all-destructive punishment, but will only constitute a part of what they demanded because God is gracious to mankind *i.e.* in deference to the Holy Prophet his people will be shown mercy and like the disbelievers of the former Prophets they will not get a destructive punishment.

2863. Commentary :

This and the next verse refer to the plots and conspiracies that disbelievers were hatching

against Islam and the Holy Prophet.

2864. Commentary :

The implied reference in this verse may be to Solomon whom the Jews accused of resorting to *Shirk* (idolatry) in order to win the affection of an idolatrous woman. The Qur'ān absolves him of this most heinous charge (as it absolves all other Prophets of the charges levelled against them by the Jews) by stating that far from stooping to idol-worship in order to win the love of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon actually converted her to the worship of the One True God and made her renounce the worship of false gods. As there had existed difference of opinion among the Jews about Solomon's behaviour towards the Queen, the Qur'ān has lifted the veil from the real fact. The verse may possess general application also.

79. Verily, thy Lord will decide between them by His judgment, and He is the Mighty, the All-Knowing.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ بِحُكْمِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾

80. "So put thy trust in Allah; surely thou *standest* on manifest truth.

فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٥٠﴾

81. Verily, thou canst not make the dead to hear, 'nor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call, when they turn back retreating.²⁸⁶⁵

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا
وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

82. "And thou canst not guide the blind out of their error. Thou canst make only those to hear who believe in Our Signs, for they submit.

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ تَسْمِعُ
إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

83. And when the sentence is passed against them, We shall bring forth for them an insect from the earth which shall wound them because people did not believe in Our Signs.²⁸⁶⁶

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ
الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

^a11 : 124 ; 25 : 59 ; 26 : 218 ; 33 : 49.

^b10 : 43 : 30 : 53.

^c10:44 ; 30 : 54.

2865. Commentary :

The words, "when they turn back retreating," can equally be applied to both "the dead" and "the deaf," thus making it clear that "the dead" mentioned here are "the spiritually dead" as the blind in the next verse are "the spiritually blind." Wherever in the Qur'ān the Holy Prophet is mentioned with reference to "the dead" they are the "spiritually dead" or "the dead of heart" (8 : 25).

2866. Important Words :

وقع (is passed). They say الشيئ من يده the

thing fell from his hand. وقع الحق means, the truth became established (Lane & Aqrab).

قول is inf. n. from قال and means, decree, sentence or the prophecy about punishment. واقع الطير على الشجر means, the bird descended upon the tree. The expression وقع القول عليهم means, the sentence or the decree became due against them; they made themselves deserving of the sentence or the decree (Lane & Aqrab).

دابة (insect) is active participle from دب which means, he or it crept or crawled slowly like an ant or a reptile or a weak person. دابة

- 7 84. And remind them of the day
“when We shall gather together from
every people a party from among those
who rejected Our Signs, and they shall
be placed in *separate* groups.”²⁸⁶⁷

85. Till, when they come, He will
say, “Did you reject My Signs, while
you did not comprehend them in
knowledge? Or what was it that you
were doing?”²⁸⁶⁸

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِمَّنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِنَا
فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ أَلْكَدَّبْتُمْ بِآيَاتِي وَلَمْ تُحِطُوا بِهَا
عِلْمًا أَمَّا ذَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

“25 : 18; 67 : 9.

“10 : 40.

signifies all such animals or insects as creep or crawl or walk slowly, all animals big or small, whether walking on two legs or on four legs or creeping on the belly, etc. The word is also used about beasts like the horse, the mule, the donkey, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). In the Qur’ān the expression دابة الارض has also been used for a worldly-minded man whose efforts are wholly devoted to the acquisition of material benefits; a grossly materialistic person, a worthless creature or worm of the earth (34 : 15).

تَكَلَّمَ (shall wound them) is aorist from كَلَّمَ (kallama). كَلَّمَ means, he talked to him or he conversed with him much and freely; he wounded him (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse seems to imply two prophetic references. Taking دابة الارض in the sense of a grossly materialistic person whose endeavours are wholly directed to the acquisition of worldly riches and material comforts, the reference seems to be to the materialistic Western nations “whose labour is all lost in search after things pertaining to the life of this world” (18:105) and who have fallen on this world with all their might and main. The verse purports to say that when men will reject the Signs of God and

by indulging in evil deeds will make themselves deserving of Divine punishment, they will fall a victim to the plunder and pillage of the materialistic and mechanistic Western nations. Taking the word in the sense of “a worm or insect of the earth,” the reference may be to the bubonic plague which was to have appeared in the time of the Promised Messiah and from whose ravages his followers were to remain miraculously immune, thus bearing witness to the truth of his claims.

2867. Commentary :

The main subject dealt with in the *Sūra* is life after death and by implication the great spiritual revolution that was to be brought about by the Holy Prophet. The appeal of the Holy Prophet to the Quraish naturally split his people into two camps—the Faithful and the disbelievers. The present and the next few verses deal with the rejectors of the Prophet’s Message and the fate that was in store for them. Life after death is another subject dealt with in these verses.

2868. Commentary :

The particle أَمَّا (rather) sometimes is used to lend emphasis to the statement which follows it. It is also used in the sense of بَلْ (rather). Here it is used in the latter sense.

86. And the sentence shall fall upon them because they did wrong, and they will be speechless.²⁸⁶⁹

87. "Have they not seen that We have made the night that they may rest therein, and the day sight-giving? In that verily are Signs for a people who believe.

88. ^bAnd on the day when the trumpet will be blown, whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth will be struck with terror, save him whom Allah pleases. And all shall come unto Him, humbled.²⁸⁷⁰

89. And thou seest the mountains that thou thinkest to be firmly fixed passing away like the passing away of the clouds—the handiwork of Allah Who has made everything perfect. Verily, He knows full well what you do.²⁸⁷¹

وَوَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا ظَلَمُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

الْمُزَيَّرُوا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لَيْسَكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَكُلُّ أَتَوَةٍ ذَخِيرٌ ﴿٨٨﴾

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسِبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَتَقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

^a10 : 68; 17 : 13; 28 : 74; 30 : 24.

^b18 : 100; 20 : 103; 36 : 52; 78 : 19.

2869. Commentary :

The expression "they will be speechless" means, "they will not be able to put in a defence of their misdeeds." The charge against them being quite true and clear will be incapable of being defended and so the sentence of punishment will be passed against them.

2870. Commentary :

The words "when the trumpet will be blown" besides referring to the Day of Resurrection, refer to the new Order that was ushered in by the Holy Prophet as if by the blowing of a trumpet. As a result of this new Order and the great revolution that the Holy Prophet brought about in the Arabian society, those

disbelievers who were regarded as their leaders and chiefs were humbled and humiliated.

2871. Commentary :

At the advent of the Holy Prophet old ideas and institutions that seemed to have been firmly rooted like mountains, melted and vanished away like the passing of clouds. Human history fails to cite an instance of such a mighty revolution brought about in so short a time in every sphere of men's ideas and actions as was wrought by the great and noble Prophet of Islam. The word جبال (mountains) may equally refer to the great and firmly established Roman and Persian Empires which were scattered like chaff before the irresistible victorious Muslim armies.

90. "Whoever does a good deed shall have a better reward than that, and such will be secure from terror that day."²⁸⁷²

91. And those who do evil, ^bshall be thrown down on their faces into the Fire; and it will be said to them, 'Are you not rewarded for what you have been doing?'^{2872A}

92. Say, "I am commanded only to serve the Lord of this city which He has made sacred, and to Him belong all things; and I am commanded to be of those who submit to God";²⁸⁷³

93. 'And to recite the Qur'ān.' So ^awhoever follows guidance, follows it only for *the good of his own soul*; and *as to him* who goes astray, say, 'I am only a Warner.'²⁸⁷⁴

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَهُمْ مِنْ فَزَعٍ
يَوْمَئِذٍ آمِنُونَ ٩٠

وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وَجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ هَلْ
تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ٩١

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّذِي
حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ٩٢

وَأَنْ أَتْلُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَمِنْ أُمَّتٍ إِذَا هَتَدَى
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُنذِرِينَ ٩٣

^a4 : 41; 6 : 161; 28 : 85.

^b26 : 95.

^c30 : 44; 106 : 4.

^d10 : 109; 39 : 42.

2872. Commentary :

Those who believed in the Holy Prophet and did righteous deeds had a good reward and became immune from all fear and apprehension about the future. And the burning of heart, as says the next verse, was the lot of the disbelievers and evil-doers. These verses may also apply to the condition of believers and disbelievers in the life after death.

2872A. Important Words :

For كُتِبَتْ (thrown down) see 26 : 95.

2873. Commentary :

One of the major causes of the opposition of Meccans to the Holy Prophet was that they believed that if idol-worship disappeared from

Arabia, Mecca (or the Ka'ba) being the repository of all their well-known idols will lose its importance and consequently they will also lose the prestige and influence they had enjoyed in Arabia as the custodians of the Ka'ba. The present verse disabuses their minds of this false notion and purports to say that being the centre of a World Movement and of the last Message for all mankind, Mecca, far from losing its importance, will, on the contrary, immeasurably add to its prestige and will continue to be respected and revered till the end of time.

2874. Commentary :

The theme of the preceding verse is further developed in the present verse and the Holy Prophet is commanded to say that from Mecca

94. And say, 'All praise belongs to Allah; He will soon show you His Signs, and you will know them.' And thy Lord is not unaware of what you do.²⁸⁷⁵

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ سَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا وَمَا
رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ٩٤

will emanate the light of the Qur'ān which will illumine the whole world.

2875. **Commentary :**

In this verse we are told that in order to

further the Quranic message God will show mighty Signs in every age which will be too manifest to be denied or ignored.

CHAPTER 28

A L-Q A Ṣ A Ṣ

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

It is generally agreed that this *Sūra* belongs to the Meccan period. 'Umar bin Muḥammad is reported to have been of the opinion that it was revealed while the Holy Prophet, during the Hijrat, was on his way to Medina. If this opinion of 'Umar is accepted as correct, even then the *Sūra* will have to be assigned to the Meccan period, because the Holy Prophet was yet on his way to Medina and the Hijrat had not become complete. Wherry believes that 'Umar bin Muḥammad's view is due to the fact that the *Sūra* contains a prophecy about the return of the Holy Prophet to Mecca which is embodied in the verse; "Most surely He Who has made the teaching of the Qur'ān binding on thee, will bring thee back to thy place of return" (28 : 86). But Wherry's assumption is uncalled for because the Companions of the Holy Prophet generally based the actual date of the revelation of a particular verse not on its subject-matter but on sound historical data. Rev. Wherry's difficulty lies in the fact that he does not believe the Qur'ān to be Divinely revealed and, therefore, when he comes across a certain verse embodying a prophecy which was later fulfilled in most adverse circumstances he is at a loss how to explain it away. He then vainly tries to show that the said verse contained no prophecy at all but only related to a certain incident. If the time of the revelation of a particular verse is to be determined by its subject-matter, as Rev. Wherry does, then a *Sūra* which deals with the conquest of Mecca will have to be regarded as having been revealed at the time of the conquest of Mecca. But such an inference would be manifestly wrong. It is a clumsy effort on the part of Mr. Wherry and some other Christian writers of his way of thinking, that they seek to infer from the subject-matter of the Quranic verses the time of their revelation. In this respect the practice of Companions of the Holy Prophet who were in a much better position than anybody else to assign the revelation of Quranic verses to a particular place or time was to fix it not according to the subject-matter of the verses but by authentic historical evidence.

The fact that the verse "Most surely He Who has made the teaching of the Qur'ān binding on thee" occurs in a Meccan *Sūra* (which the present Chapter admittedly is) clearly shows that the Holy Prophet was yet in Mecca when he was foretold that at first he would have to leave Mecca as a fugitive and then he would come back to it as a conqueror. Incidentally, the fulfilment of this prophecy in a most remarkable manner and under circumstances quite unforeseeable, also constitutes an invincible proof of the Qur'ān being God's own revealed Word.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

The preceding *Sūra* Al-Naml had ended with the verse, *So whoever follows guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul and as to him who goes astray, say, I am only a Warner.* The verse meant that no force would be allowed to be used in the propagation of the teachings of the Qur'ān. It was to establish the truth of this Quranic claim that the present *Sūra* was revealed. The *Sūra* opens with the abbreviated letters ط-س-م, of which ط stands for لطيف (Benignant), س stands for سميع (All-Hearing) and م represents مليم (All-Knowing) or ملك (Sovereign) or مجيد (Lord of honour). These abbreviated letters signify that God is Benignant and very kind to His servants. He does not use force for the propagation of truth nor does He punish men without a compelling reason. He is All-Hearing inasmuch as when darkness enshrouded the entire face of the earth and the cry went up from the innermost depths of the human soul for heavenly guidance, He revealed the Qur'ān. He is also the Sovereign and the Master and so He does not leave His servants in the lurch and being the Lord of honour it is inconsistent with His Dignity and Majesty to leave them without right guidance. For this purpose He has revealed the Qur'ān which is an illuminating Book. The Qur'ān stands in need of no outside help or assistance in order to support and substantiate the truth of its claim but gives its own proofs and arguments.

Subject-Matter

The present is the third and last of the *Sūrās* which belong to the ط-س-م group. These three *Sūrās* open with the same Muqatta'āt (abbreviated letters) and therefore possess a striking similarity in subject-matter. They all begin with the important subject of the revelation of the Qur'ān and end with the same subject. In all of them the life-story of Moses, the greatest Israelite Prophet and a counterpart of the Holy Prophet, and an account of the varying conditions and circumstances through which the Israelites had to pass to come to their own, have been given. The emphasis in these *Sūrās* is on the different aspects of Moses's life. In Chapter 26th—Al-Shu'arā,' which is the first *Sūra* of this group, much space is devoted to the presentation by Moses of his message to Pharaoh, the unassailable arguments he gave to prove his thesis and to the great miracles he showed which ended in the discomfiture and humiliation of Pharaoh and in the defeat of the magicians and their eventual belief in Moses and Aaron. In Chapter 27th—Al-Naml—pride of place is given to the manifestation that Moses saw of the Divine Glory and Majesty and to the spiritual experience that he had in the blessed Valley of Ṭuwā. Further on that *Sūra* deals in some detail with the reigns of David and Solomon, the two great Prophets and monarchs of the Mosaic Dispensation when the Israelite power, prosperity and prestige were at their zenith. In the present *Sūra*, however, the different phases of Moses's life have been treated in greater detail than in any other *Sūra*—his infancy and childhood, his youth, his Hijrat and his Call, the implication being that the Holy Prophet, who was the like of Moses would also go through similar experiences, though under different conditions and circumstances. The *Sūra* opens with an account of the pitiable condition of the Israelites under Pharaoh—how by his policy of ruthless exploitation and suppression he sought to kill in them all manly qualities and how when their degradation and humiliation had reached its nadir, God raised Moses and through him brought about their emancipation, drowning Pharaoh and his mighty hosts in the sea before their very eyes. The *Sūra* then

proceeds to tell briefly but very graphically how Moses was cast into the sea and was then taken out of it alive and later on was brought up by Pharaoh, his arch-enemy, to serve as an instrument of the latter's destruction in the hands of Destiny.

Next, the *Sūra* deals in greater detail with the circumstances that led to Moses's flight from Egypt and to his sojourn in Midian for ten long years in the company of a righteous servant of God, which left an indelible and abiding imprint on his whole spiritual career. After this mention is made of Moses's greatest spiritual experience in life when in a vision he saw a manifestation of Divine Glory and Majesty. Then we are told that having been fully equipped with all spiritual weapons and assisted and helped by his brother Aaron who himself was a great Prophet of God, Moses went to preach the Divine message to Pharaoh who ridiculed and mocked at him and was consequently seized with Divine punishment.

After having finished the account of Moses's life-story, the *Sūra* refers to the prophecies that are to be found in the Bible about the Holy Prophet and proceeds to tell the Quraish that if they accepted him, they would enjoy all those spiritual and material blessings and benefits of which Mecca the centre and citadel of the new Faith, was destined to receive. But if they rejected him, they would incur the displeasure of God because God does not punish a people unless He has first raised among them a Messenger.

The *Sūra* further says that when disbelievers, on account of their persistent rejection of truth are seized with punishment, they start condemning and denouncing the leaders of disbelief who, they say, lead them astray and are the cause of their ruin. But the latter disown them and even curse them for having blindly followed them. The real cause, however, of the rejection of the Divine message, the *Sūra* says, is that puffed up with material wealth and lulled into a false sense of security, men of wealth and influence make light of God's Prophets, mock at them and persecute them, ignoring the patent fact that the good things of this world are but transient and temporary. But such is the tragedy of human life that man has always consigned to oblivion the supreme moral lesson which is writ large on the pages of history that the rejection of truth has never been allowed to go unpunished and disbelief has always landed its protagonists into ruin.

Towards its close the *Sūra* makes a pointed reference to a mighty prophecy which was implied in Moses's flight from Egypt to Midian, his sojourn there for ten years and in his subsequent return to Egypt and in delivering the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh. The prophecy was to the effect that like Moses the Holy Prophet of Islam also will have to leave his native place and go to live in a strange place for ten years and then will come back to the cradle of his Faith and will conquer Mecca and establish Islam on a firm footing. The last few verses of the *Sūra* sum up its subject-matter and the Holy Prophet is told that he never had the remotest idea that he will ever be made the bearer of the Divine message, but now that he has actually been entrusted with the onerous and noble task of preaching the truth, he should call all mankind to the ways of the Lord and trusting in God and refusing to be discouraged or dismayed, should fight his way to success like a great soldier.

سُورَةُ الْقَصَصِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٨)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²⁸⁷⁶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bTā Sīn Mīm.^{2876A}

طسّم ②

3. "These are verses of the clear Book."²⁸⁷⁷

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْبَيِّنِ ③

4. We rehearse unto thee *a portion* of the story of Moses and Pharaoh with truth, for *the benefit* of a people who would believe.²⁸⁷⁸

نَتْلُو عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَبَأِ مُوسَى وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ④

5. "Verily, Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the earth, and divided the people thereof into parties; he sought to weaken one party of them, 'slaying their sons, and sparing their women. Certainly, he was of the mischief-makers."²⁸⁷⁹

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُدِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِ نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b26 : 2 ; 27 : 2. ^c12 : 2; 15 : 2; 26 : 3; 27 : 2. ^d10 : 84. ^e2 : 50; 7 : 142; 14 : 7.

2876. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2876A. Commentary :

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters, ^{Tā Sīn Mīm}, see 26 : 2 & 27 : 2.

2877. Commentary :

This verse has been commented upon in some detail in 12 : 2; 26 : 3 & 27 : 2.

2878. Commentary :

Perhaps in no other *Sūra* of the Qur'ān have the different phases of Moses's life been treated in such detail as in the present *Sūra*—his infancy, and childhood, his youth, his Flight or exile and his Call. The Holy Prophet's pre-

eminence as a Prophet is a thing apart, but as he has been "likened" to Moses, the conditions and circumstances of his life resemble more those of Moses than of any other Prophet.

The words, "with truth" imply that the Quranic narrative of Moses differs in certain details from that of the Bible but wherever the Quranic description differs from the Biblical account, it will be found to be nearer truth^h and reality.

2879. Commentary :

The policy of "divide and rule" which has been practised with such deadly effect by the Colonial Powers of the West in this twentieth century

6. And We desired to show favour unto those who had been considered weak in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them inheritors of Our favours,²⁸⁸⁰

7. And to establish them in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts that which they feared from them.²⁸⁸¹

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ آيَةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ ۖ

وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ
وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ ۚ

a7 : 138; 26 : 60; 44 : 29.

was also followed by Pharaoh. He had split the people of Egypt into parties and sections and had made invidious distinctions between them. Some of them he favoured and others he exploited and suppressed. Moses's people belonged to the latter unfortunate class.

The words, "he slew their sons and spared their women," besides bearing the apparent sense, viz., that in order to keep the Israelites under permanent subjection, Pharaoh destroyed their manhood and kept alive their women, may also signify that by his policy of exploitation and heartless suppression, Pharaoh sought to kill all manly qualities among the Israelites and thus made them timid like women.

2880. Commentary :

When the degradation and humiliation of the Israelites in Egypt reached its nadir and the cup of iniquities of Pharaoh and his people became full to the brim and God in His infallible wisdom decreed that the oppressors should be punished and those held in bondage be emancipated, He raised Moses. Such has always been God's practice that He raises a Prophet to lead a down-trodden people to honour and glory and through his influence and under his lead the erstwhile suppressed and exploited

people become the leaders and teachers of men. This phenomenon which took place in the time of every Divine Messenger witnessed its fullest and finest manifestation during the ministry of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

The words "to make them inheritors," refer to the Israelites becoming heirs to that 'land of promise'—Canaan—which, like Egypt, "flowed with milk and honey" and which God had "ordained for them" (5 : 22).

2881. Commentary :

Exploitation and tyranny produce their own nemesis and the exploiters and oppressors never feel secure from the standard of revolt being raised against them by those whom they exploit, suppress and oppress. The greater the oppression of the tyrant, the greater his fear of revolt on the part of the tyrannized. Pharaoh, too, was seized with this fear and, therefore, he employed all sorts of means and machinations to keep the Israelites under permanent subjection. But the time had come that he should be punished and those held in bondage should be emancipated.

Hāmān was the title of the High Priest of the god Amon, "ham" in Egyptian meaning high priest and Amon was the god who dominated all other Egyptian gods. "Hāmān

8. ^aAnd We revealed to the mother of Moses *saying*, 'Suckle him; and when thou fearest for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve; for We shall restore him to thee, and shall make him *one* of the Messengers.'²⁸⁸²

9. ^bAnd the people of Pharaoh picked him up that he might become for them an enemy and a *source* of sorrow. Verily, Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts were wrongdoers.²⁸⁸³

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ
عَلَيْهِ فَالْقِيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۚ إِنَّا
رَآدُّوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝

فَالْتَقَطَهُ آلُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا ۖ
إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ ۝

^a20 : 39.

^b20 : 40.

was the director of the double treasury and granary and director of the soldiers and all the craftsmen of Thebes. His name was Nebunnef and he was high priest under Ramesus II and his son Merneptah. Being the head of the extremely rich sacerdotal organization embracing all the priesthoods of the country his power and prestige had increased so much that he controlled a most influential political faction and even kept his own private army" (A story of Egypt by James Henry Breasted, Ph.D).

Hāmān is also said to be the name of a minister of Ahasuerus, a king of Persia who lived many ages after Moses. There is nothing strange or objectionable in two persons living in two different periods bearing the same name. But Mr. Wherry, only to expose his own crass ignorance, has pretended to discover a serious anachronism in the Qur'ān having called a minister of Pharaoh by the name of Hāmān, which accidentally was also the name of a minister of a king of Persia (Wherry's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 254). In fact, anachronism lies in the brain of Mr. Wherry himself and not in the

Qur'ān.

2882. **Commentary :**

The preceding seven verses had spoken of Moses's mission and by implication had referred to the mission of the Holy Prophet and in fact to the mission of every Prophet of God. From this verse, however, begins the actual story of Moses.

Whereas Moses was cast into the river by his mother to escape being killed by the people of Pharaoh, the Holy Prophet's mother had to entrust him, while yet a child, to the care of a poor wet-nurse, to whom all the well-to-do families of Mecca had refused to entrust their babies on account of her poverty.

2883. **Important Words :**

لَقَطَهُ (picked him up) is derived from التقط which means, he picked it up, took it up from the ground. التقط الشيء means, he picked up the thing; he stumbled upon it unexpectedly without seeking it. لقيته التقاطا means, I met him unexpectedly (Lane & Aqrab).

The particle ل in لِيَكُونَ (that he might become) is called لام العاقبة and denotes result and consequence, as in the well-known Arabic couplet :

10. And Pharaoh's wife said, 'He will be a joy of the eye for me and for thee. Slay him not. Haply he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.' And they perceived not the consequences thereof.²⁸⁸⁴

وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرْتُ عَيْنٍ لِّي وَلَكَ لَا تَقْتُلُوهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And the heart of the mother of Moses became free from anxiety. She had almost disclosed his identity, were it not that We had strengthened her heart so that she might be of the firm believers.²⁸⁸⁵

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَرِحًا إِنَّ كَادَتْ لِتُبَيِّنَ بِهِ لَوْلَا أَنْ رَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١﴾

لِدُوا لِلْمَوْتِ وَأَبْنُوا لِلْخِرَابِ فَكَلِمَتُكُمْ يَسِيرُ إِلَىٰ تَبَابٍ *i.e.* bear children that they should die and build houses that they should fall into ruins, for all of you are marching towards destruction. Thus the first part of the verse would mean, "And the family of Pharaoh picked him up with the result that ultimately he became an enemy and a source of great grief and sorrow for them.

devoid; he died. فرغ له means, he made him or it the object to which he directed himself. فارغ means, vacant, devoid of or free from care or anxiety or disquietude (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

2884. Commentary :

God's ways indeed are inscrutable. Pharaoh did not know that the very child upon whom he had lavished so much care and love will one day prove an instrument of punishment for him in the hands of Destiny because he had flouted and defied Divine commandments and had held the Israelites in bondage and had tyrannised over them for a long time.

The heart of Moses's mother became free from care or anxiety because of the consolation and assurance given to her by Divine revelation referred to in v. 8 above. The pronoun *به* in *ان كادت* may refer either to Moses or to the matter concerned. In the first case the expression *ان كادت لتبين به* would mean that Moses's mother was so much pleased with Moses having been restored to her that out of joy she was on the point of declaring that the child belonged to her. In the second case the meaning would be that if God had not restrained her, she almost had told people about the whole affair—how she had received a Divine revelation and how in pursuance of it she had put the child into the river and so on.

2885. Important Words :

فرغ (free from anxiety) is derived from فرغ which means, it was or became empty, void,

12. And she said to his sister, 'Follow him up.' So she observed him from afar; and they knew not of her relationship.^{2885A}

وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيهُ فَبَصَّرَتْ بِهِ عَنْ جُنُبٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ^{١٢}

13. And We had already ordained that he should refuse the wet-nurses; so she said, "Shall I tell you of a household who will bring him up for you and will be his sincere well-wishers?"

وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ نَصْحُونَ^{١٣}

14. Thus did We restore him to his mother that her eye might be gladdened and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not.

فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَى أُمِّهِ كَى تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ وَلِتَعْلَمَ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ^{١٤}

2 15. ^bAnd when he reached his age of full strength and attained maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good.²⁸⁸⁶

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَى آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ^{١٥}

^a20 : 41. ^b12 : 23; 46 : 16.

2885A. Important Words :

قصيه (follow him up) is derived from قص. They say قصه i.e. he cut it; or he clipped it. قص أثره means, he followed, or followed after, his track, or footsteps, in pursuit; he endeavoured to trace or track him; he endeavoured to trace him by degrees, or by night or at any time (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 177 & 12 : 4.

2886. Commentary :

Moses was fully equipped with temporal as

well as Divine knowledge. Having been brought up in the house of a powerful monarch of the time he must have had the best tutors to teach him the current sciences. His physical development must also have been perfect as is apparent from 28 : 16; and he must have been inspired by noble ideals. As God had marked him out for a great destiny, he was endowed with wisdom and spiritual knowledge in a very large measure. By the time Moses had attained maturity he was a ^{محصن} i.e. a constant doer of good deeds.

16. And *one day* he entered the city at a time when its inhabitants were in a state of heedlessness; and he found therein two men fighting—one of his own party, and the other of his enemies. And he who was of his party sought his help against him who was of his enemies. "So Moses struck him with his fist; and thereby caused his death. Then he said, 'This is of Satan's doing; he is indeed an enemy, a manifest misleader.'²⁸⁸⁷

17. He said, 'My Lord, I have wronged my soul, so do Thou forgive me.' So He forgave him; He is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁸⁸⁸

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَى حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا
فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَٰذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ
وَهَٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَنَاجَّهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ
عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ
قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۝١٦

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝١٧

20 : 41; 26 : 20.

2887. Important Words :

وَكَزَهُ (struck him with his fist) means, he struck or beat him; he beat or struck him with his fist; he pushed or impelled or repelled him; he goaded him (Lane).

Commentary :

Being of a very noble nature and having been inspired by high ideals, Moses was always ready to help weak and oppressed people and so when a poor and weak Israelite sought his help against an arrogant and cruel Egyptian, he at once went to his rescue.

The expression, "this is of Satan's doing," according to Arabic idiom means that some evil thing has happened, *i.e.*, "Satan had caused an Egyptian and an Israelite to fight and I had to come to the assistance of the oppressed Israelite which resulted in an evil thing *i.e.*, the death of a person." Or the words might have been

addressed to the dead Egyptian meaning, "this is the outcome of your Satanic deed," *i.e.* "your death is the result of your own wickedness and transgression." The fact that Moses used no lethal weapon and only repelled the Egyptian or at best struck him with his fist shows that the latter's death was accidental. Clearly there was no intention on Moses's part to cause it.

The Qur'ān has not mentioned the wicked deed of the Egyptian to which Moses refers in this verse but from Jewish Encyclopaedia we know that the said Egyptian had forced an Israelite woman to commit adultery with him and that was indeed a devilish deed. It apparently led to the quarrel referred to in the verse and ultimately to Moses's interference and the death of the Egyptian (Jew. Enc. under "Moses").

2888. Important Words :

ظَلَمْتُ (I have wronged my soul) is derived from ظَلَمَ which means, he did wrong;

18. He said, 'My Lord, because of the favour Thou hast bestowed upon me, I will never be a helper of the guilty.'²⁸⁸⁹

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا
لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ ①٨

19. And morning found him in the city, apprehensive, watchful; and lo! he who had sought his help the day before cried out to him *again* for help. Moses said to him: 'Verily, thou art manifestly a misguided fellow.'²⁸⁹⁰

فَاصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي
اسْتَنْصَرَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهُ قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى
إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ①٩

he acted unjustly or tyrannically; he put a thing in a wrong place; he made one to suffer loss or detriment. ظالماً also signifies, he imposed upon him a burden that was beyond his power or ability to bear; he exposed himself to danger (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 2 : 36, 52 & 17 : 60.

Commentary :

Moses realized that in trying to help the poor Israelite he had happened to kill the Egyptian and thus had exposed himself to a great danger and had taken upon himself a burden which apparently he did not have the power to bear. So he prayed to God to protect him from the evil consequences that might flow from his accidentally killing a member of the ruling race.

2889. Commentary :

The verse shows Moses as saying, "My Lord! Thou hast always been Gracious to me, so in my gratitude to Thee for Thy favour, I promise that

I will always help the oppressed as I did on the last occasion, and will never take sides with the oppressors." Or it may mean, "My Lord, since Thou hast given me an opportunity to help an oppressed man and thus hast done me a great favour, so in gratitude for Thy favour I will always help the poor and the oppressed." Or the verse may mean, "My Lord, since Thou hast been always kind and gracious to me, how can I be a helper and supporter of the oppressors?"

2890. Commentary :

Moses in this verse seems to reproach the man who called him for help by saying to him, "you are a foolish fellow and not being able to realise the consequences of your actions you become readily involved in trouble." The words do not mean, as is generally misunderstood, that Moses regarded the man as an offender.

20. And when he made up his mind to lay hold of the man who was an enemy to both of them, he said, 'O Moses, dost thou intend to kill me as thou didst kill a man yesterday? Thou only desirest to become a tyrant in the land, and thou desirest not to be a peace-maker.'²⁸⁹¹

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا
قَالَ يَمُوسَى أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا
بِالْأَمْسِ إِنْ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And there came a man from the far side of the city, running. He said, 'O Moses, of a truth, the chiefs are taking counsel together against thee to kill thee. Therefore get thee away; surely, I am of thy well-wishers.'²⁸⁹²

وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَمُوسَى
إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَتَرَوْنَ بِكَ لَيَقْتُلُونَكَ فَأَخْرِجْ إِنِّي لَكَ
مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. "So he went forth therefrom, fearful, watchful. He said, 'My Lord, deliver me from the unjust people.'

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ
الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

^a26 : 22

2891. Commentary :

The words "who was an enemy to both of them," show that the man referred to was an Egyptian. But if he was an Israelite as the Bible says then he must have been in league with the Egyptians and must have reported the previous day's incident to the authorities and thus was an enemy both to Moses and the Israelite who called Moses for help.

2892. Commentary :

The implied reference in the verse is to the counsel that the leaders of Mecca had held to kill the Holy Prophet. But whereas Moses was informed of the designs of the Egyptian chiefs by a well-wisher of his, as the verse under comment says, the Holy Prophet was made aware of the evil designs of the Quraishite leaders against him by God Himself (8 : 31).

٢. 3 23. And when he turned his face towards Midian, he said, 'I hope, my Lord will guide me to the right way.'

24. And when he arrived at the water of Midian, he found there a party of men, watering *their flocks*. And he found beside them two women keeping back *their flocks*. He said, 'What is the matter with you?' They replied, 'We cannot water *our flocks* until the shepherds take away *their flocks*, and our father is a very old man.'²⁸⁹³

25. So he watered *their flocks* for them. Then he turned aside into the shade, and said, 'My Lord, I am in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me.'

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ هُ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصَدِّرَ الرِّعَاءَ وَابُنَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

فَسَقَىٰ لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّىٰ إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي بِمَا أَنَزَلْتَنِي إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

2893. Important Words :

ذاد (keeping back) is formed from ذاد which means, he drove; drove away, and he repelled. ذاد الابل عن الماء means, he kept back or debarred the camels from the water, or prevented them from coming to it. They say ذاد عن عرضه i.e. he defended his honour (Lane & Aqrab).

يصدر (take back) is from صدر which means, he returned, went back or turned away from water. صدر اليه means, he went to it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The girls seem to be jealous of the honour

of their father and therefore in order to disabuse Moses's mind of any possible misconception that their father was an indolent and easy-going man for having sent his young daughters to the well and keeping himself at home they say that their father is an old man and therefore could not himself come to water his flock.

The general opinion among the Commentators of the Qur'ān is that Shu'aib was Moses's father-in-law. In the Bible he is called Jethro (Exod. 3 : 1).

26. And one of the two *women* came to him, walking bashfully. She said, 'My father calls thee that he may reward thee for thy having watered *our flocks* for us.' So when he came to him and told him the story, he said, 'Fear not; thou hast escaped from the unjust people.'²⁸⁹⁴

27. One of the two *women* said, 'O my father, hire him; for the best man that thou canst hire is the one who is strong and trustworthy.'

28. He said, 'I intend to marry one of these two daughters of mine to thee on condition that thou serve me on hire for eight years. But if thou complete ten years, it will be of thine own accord. And I would not lay any hardship upon thee; thou wilt find me, if Allah wills, of the righteous.'^{2894A}

فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَتَشَّى عَلَى اسْتِخْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ
أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقِصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ نَجَوْتَ
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَأَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ
اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ ﴿٢٧﴾

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ
عَلَى أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَنِي حَجَجٍ فَإِنْ أَتَيْتَ عَشْرًا
فَبِنِ عِنْدَكَ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ سَتَجِدُنِي
إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

2894. Commentary :

The words, "thou has escaped from the wicked people," show that on hearing Moses's story the old and righteous man was convinced that Moses had committed no murder and that the death of the Egyptian was only accidental. On the other hand he dubbed and denounced the Egyptians as a wicked people.

2894A. Commentary :

The construction of the verse does not seem to lend countenance to the conclusion generally considered derivable from it, viz., that Shu'aib or Jethro agreed to marry one of his daughters to Moses in lieu of eight or ten years of service. The fact of the matter appears to be that Shu'aib having grown very old needed an honest man to

look after his flocks and Moses having been found as possessing the required qualifications was taken in service by him at the instance of one of his daughters. Eight or ten years were agreed upon as the tenure of service. Shu'aib, however, being a holy man either himself realized or was informed by God that a great future lay before Moses. He, therefore, offered to marry one of his daughters to him and, desiring that his son-in-law should live with him for some time and benefit by his noble company, laid it down as one of the conditions of marriage that Moses should stay with him for eight or ten years. Thus it is not correct to say that Shu'aib offered to marry his daughter to Moses in lieu of the latter serving him for eight or ten years. Whatever remuneration

29. He said, 'That is *settled* between me and thee. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no injustice to me; and Allah watches over what we say.'

قَالَ ذَلِكَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ أَيَّمَا الْأَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا
عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ ٢٩

.. 4 30. And when Moses had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he perceived a fire in the direction of the Mount. He said to his family, 'Wait, "I perceive a fire; haply I may bring you some *useful* information therefrom, or a burning brand from the fire that you may warm yourselves.'²⁸⁹⁵

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ
جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ
نَارًا تَلْعَلْ أَتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ ٣٠

^a20 : 11; 27 : 8.

Moses might have received from Shu'aib had nothing to do with the marriage proposal.

The flight of Moses from Egypt and his stay in Midian for ten years bears a striking resemblance to the residence of the Holy Prophet for ten years in Medina after his Hijrat from Mecca. Moses must have, in a large measure, benefited himself spiritually by his God-fearing and righteous father-in-law's company just as his upbringing in the house of Pharaoh had equipped him with temporal knowledge. But the noble Prophet of Islam was indebted to no human being for the great treasures of spiritual and temporal knowledge possessed by him. He had received them direct from God.

The expression *من عندك* means, 'It would be an additional favour from you.'

2895. Important Words :

جذوة (burning brand) is derived from جذأ. They say جذأ على الشيء *i.e.* he stood firmly upon a thing. جذوة means, a brand or firebrand; a thick piece of firewood not flaming; a piece of fire; a live coal. They say فلان جذوة شر *i.e.* such a one is a kindler or a piece of mischief (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Seclusion and solitude are very essential for meditation and communion with the Divine Being. Moses sought separation from his family, in fact from all worldly contacts and connections, in order that he might be blessed with communion with God.

31. And when he came to it, ^ahe was called *by a voice* from the right side of the Valley, in the blessed spot, out of the tree : 'O Moses, verily I am, Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'²⁸⁹⁶

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ
الْبُرَكَّةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يُّوَسِّىَ إِيَّيَّيَّ أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. And it also said, ^b'Throw down thy rod.' And when he saw it move as though it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not look back. 'O Moses, come forward and fear not; surely, thou art of those who are safe.'²⁸⁹⁷

وَأَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهَا تُهْتَزُّ كَانَهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى
مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَؤُوسَةً أَقْبَلَ وَلَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ
مِنَ الْأَمِينِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. 'Insert thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without evil effect, and draw back thy arm toward thyself *in order to be free* from fear. So those *shall be* two proofs from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Surely, they are a rebellious people.'²⁸⁹⁸

أَسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ
وَاضْمُمْ إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الظَّهْمِ فَذُنُوبُهُمْ
مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا
فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a19 : 53 ; 20 : 81 ; 79 : 17. ^b7 : 118; 20 : 20; 26 : 46. ^c7 : 109 ; 20 : 23; 27 : 4.

2896. Important Words :

شاطئ (side) is derived from شطا which means, he walked on the bank or side of the river. شطا الام بالولد means, the mother threw or cast away the child. الشاطئ من النهر means, the side or bank of the stream (Aqrah).

بقعة (plot) is infinitive-noun from باع (baqi'a) which means, it (a bird or dog) was black and white; it was partly coloured and pied. بقعة means, a piece, part, portion or plot of land differing in appearance or colour or external state from that which adjoins it. The Arabs say هو حسن البقعة عند الأمير i.e. he has a good station with the prince (Lane & Aqrah).

Commentary :

Whereas Moses was only on the side of the blessed spiritual valley, the Holy Prophet Muhammad had actually entered it (53 : 14, 15). Moses could not attain that high stage of nearness to God, which was reserved for the Holy Prophet.

2897. Commentary :

For an exhaustive treatment of the miracles of the rod and white hand see 7 : 108, 109 & 20 : 19-24.

2898. Important Words :

ذاك (those two) is the dual of ذاك which is formed from ذا which is a noun of indication

34. "He said, 'My Lord, I killed a person from among them, and I fear that they will kill me.'²⁸⁹⁹

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَأَخَافُ أَنْ
يَقْتُلُونِ ③٤

35. 'And my brother Aaron—he is more eloquent in speech than I; 'send him therefore with me as a helper that he may bear witness to my truth. I fear that they will accuse me of falsehood.'²⁹⁰⁰

وَإِخِي هَارُونَ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسَلْهُ مَعِيَ
رِدْءًا يُصَدِّقُنِي إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ ③٥

36. "God said, 'We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother, and We will give power to you both so that they shall not be able to reach you. Go with Our Signs. You two and those who follow you will be the victors.'²⁹⁰¹

قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِإِخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَانًا
فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا بِآيَاتِنَا أَتَتَّبِعُكُمَا
الْغَالِبُونَ ③٦

^a20 : 41 ; 26 : 15.

^b20 : 30-33; 26 : 14.

^c19 : 54; 20 : 37.

(properly meaning *this*, but sometimes, when repeated, better rendered *that*), relating to an object of masc. gender, such as is near: or it relates to what is distant (according to some, and therefore should always be rendered *that*). ذَاكَ relates to an object which is distant or to that which occupies a middle place between the near and the distant. They say ذانك الرجلان *i.e.* those two persons came to me (Lane & Aqrab).

2899. Commentary :

In this verse Moses alludes only to the mere fact of a man having been accidentally killed by him and not that he pleads guilty to the charge of deliberately killing him.

2900. Important Words :

رِدْءًا (helper) is infinitive noun from رَدَأَ (*rada'*).

They say رَدَأَ الْحَائِطُ *i.e.* he supported or propped the wall by means of a piece of timber or wood or buttress to prevent it from falling. رَدَأَهُ means, he helped, aided or assisted him. 'رَدْ means, a buttress or the like by means of which a wall is strengthened and supported; a thing by means of which one is helped, aided or assisted; a helper or aider. They say رَدَى فُلَانٌ *i.e.* such a one is an aider to such a one (Lane & Aqrab).

2901. Important Words :

عَضُدٌ (thy arm) is derived from عَضَدَ (*aḍada*) They say عَضَدَهُ *i.e.* he aided or assisted him. عَضَدَ الدَّابَّةَ means, he walked by the side of the beast. عَضِدٌ means, the upper arm or upper half of the arm; the side of the arm-pit and the side of a road; an aider or assistant. They say هُمْ أَعْضَادِي *i.e.* they are my aiders (Lane & Aqrab).

37. "And when Moses came to them with Our clear Signs, they said, 'This is nothing but a forged sorcery, and we never heard *the like* of this among our forefathers.'

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرٍ وَمَا سَعَيْنَا بِهِذِهِ فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. Moses said, 'My Lord knows best who it is that has brought guidance from Him, and whose will be the reward of the *final* abode. Verily, the wrongdoers never prosper.'²⁹⁰²

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَن جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ وَمَن تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. And Pharaoh said, 'O chiefs, ^bI know of no god for you other than myself; so burn me *bricks of clay*, 'O Hāmān, and build me a tower, that I may have a look at the God of Moses, though I believe him to be one of the liars.'²⁹⁰³

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَهُامَنُ عَلَى الطِّينِ فَأَجْعَلْ لِّي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّي أَطَّلِعُ إِلَىٰ إِلَهِ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لَأَكْظَمُهُ مِنَ الْكَذَّابِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a29 : 40. ^b26 : 30. ^c40 : 37.

2902. Commentary :

The words, "the wrong-doers never prosper," lay down an immutable law of God and an infallible criterion to test the truth of a claimant to Divine revelation. The law is that a false claimant to Divine revelation or a false Prophet never succeeds in his mission. Sooner or later he must come to naught.

2903. Commentary :

The verse is susceptible of two interpretations: (1) The Israelites were already working as labourers at the kilns. Pharaoh alludes to this ignoble condition of theirs and seems derisively to say to Hāmān : "These people do not appear to have sufficient work to do.

Having more than enough leisure they have begun to dream of prophethood. They must be put to hard labour; then will they come to their senses and give up having false illusions about God and prophethood." (2) The Egyptians were well-versed in astronomy. They built high observatories for observing the movements of the stars. So Pharaoh jeeringly asked Hāmān to build for him a lofty observatory so that he might have a peep at the God of Moses. The verse may also imply a reference to an ancient belief of the Egyptians that heavenly spirits descended upon lofty places and therefore in order to achieve spiritual perfection they constructed high buildings.

40. "And he and his hosts behaved arrogantly in the land without any justification. And they thought that they would never be brought back to Us.

وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَ
ظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

41. ^bSo We seized him and his hosts, and cast them into the sea. See, then, how *evil* was the end of the wrong-doers!²⁹⁰⁴

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ ۖ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

42. And We made them leaders ^owho invited *people* unto the Fire; and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped.

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ آيَةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

43. ^dAnd We caused them to be followed by a curse in this world; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be among those deprived of *all* good.²⁹⁰⁵

وَاتَّبَعْنَاهُمْ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُمْ
مِنَ الْمَقْبُوحِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a7 : 134. ^b2 : 51; 7 : 137; 17 : 104; 20 : 79; 26 : 67; 79 : 26 ^c11 : 99. ^d11 : 61, 100.

2904. Commentary :

The use of the word يَم (sea) in this verse and v. 8 above seems to suggest a curious coincidence. In order to save the child Moses from being killed by Pharaoh, Moses's mother cast him into the يَم from which he was later rescued. But Pharaoh and his mighty hosts while endeavouring to cross the يَم in order to overtake the Israelites, were drowned. See also 20 : 79.

2905. Important Words :

مَقْبُوحِينَ (deprived of good) is the plural of مَقْبُوح which is passive participle from قَبَح (qabaha). They say قَبَحَ الله (qabbaha) i.e. God

removed him or may God remove him far from good or prosperity or from all that is good. or God rendered him or may God render him foul, unseemly, unsightly, ugly or hideous or despised. مَقْبُوح means, removed far from good or prosperity or from all that is good or from success or the attainment of that which he desires or seeks, or driven away like a dog or despised or rendered foul, unseemly, ugly or hideous. قَبَح (qabaha) which is intransitive form means, it was or became bad, abominable, ugly or hideous. قَبِيح which means, bad, ugly, abominable, etc. is formed from this verb (Lane & Aqrab).

- 5 44. "And We gave the Book to Moses, after We had destroyed the earlier generations, as a source of enlightenment for men, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might reflect."²⁹⁰⁶

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ
الْأُولَى بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

45. And thou wast not on the western side of the Mount when We committed the matter of prophethood to Moses, nor wast thou among the witnesses.²⁹⁰⁷

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى
الْأَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

^{a7} : 155; 46 : 13.

2906. Important Words :

بصائر (source of enlightenment) is the plural of بصيرة which means, perceptive faculty of the mind, understanding; intelligence; firm belief of the heart; an evidence, testimony, proof or argument; a witness; a shield; the blood by which one is directed to an animal that has been shot (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 204.

Commentary :

In this verse the Book of Moses has been described as بصائر which in view of the various meanings of this word seemed to possess the following characteristics: (1) It was a potent means of sharpening the perceptive faculties of those who believed in it and followed it, as the Word of God is indeed a great sharpener of human intellect. (2) It constituted a strong evidence in favour of the Holy Prophet and a pointer, directing people to the Qur'ān. It also served as an argument and a proof to prove the truth of Moses's own claim. (3) It served as a shield which protected followers of Moses from the vicissitudes of time and heavenly chastisement. (4) It formed a mark or sign which pointed and led to God as the blood of a wounded animal

points and leads to the place where it has fallen. This means that the Torah served as a guidance and showed the believers the way to God and led them right up to the threshold of His pleasure and nearness. In fact, all Divine Books possess these attributes and characteristics in a greater or lesser degree in keeping with their Divine status and the scope and tenure of their Message.

2907. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the prophecy of Moses about the advent of the Holy Prophet (Deut. 18:18) has been fulfilled so clearly and in such detail as if he was present in person with Moses and the latter was actually seeing him when he was making the prophecy. The verse possesses a double significance. It proves the truth of Moses himself, inasmuch as he made a prophecy about the advent of the Holy Prophet which was literally fulfilled, and it proves also the truth of the Holy Prophet, as the prophecy made by Moses about the advent of "a Prophet like unto him from among the brethren of the Israelites" was fulfilled in his person in letter and in spirit.

46. But We brought forth generations *after Moses*, and life became prolonged for them. Neither wast thou a dweller among the people of Midian, rehearsing Our Signs unto them; but it is We Who send Messengers.²⁹⁰⁸

وَلَكِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَا قُرُونًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَلَكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. And thou wast not on the side of the Mount *with Moses* ^awhen We called to him. But *We have sent thee* as a mercy from thy Lord, ^bthat thou mayest warn a people to whom no Warner had come before thee, that they may reflect.²⁹⁰⁹

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْ نَادَيْنَا وَلَكِنْ رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

^a 20 : 12-13 ; 79 : 17. ^b 32 : 4 ; 36 : 7.

2908. Commentary :

This verse alludes to two more significant facts: (1) Ages passed and a long line of Prophets appeared after Moses and they preached their Messages, yet none of these Prophets ever claimed to be "that Prophet" about whom Moses had made the prophecy mentioned in Deut. 18:18, till the Qur'ān was revealed and it claimed that the grand prophecy of Moses had been fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet of Islam (73 : 16). (2) The words "And thou wast not a dweller among the people of Midian, rehearsing Our Signs unto them" refer to a striking resemblance of the Holy Prophet with Moses. According to the prophecy (Deut. 18 : 18) the Promised Prophet was to be like unto Moses, and what greater similarity there could be between these two noble Prophets than that Moses had to flee for life from Egypt, where he was born and brought up, to Midian where for ten long years he lived among a strange people, and then went back to Egypt, armed with Divine authority to free and reclaim his depressed people, from the

bondage of Pharaoh. Likewise the Prophet of Islam had to leave Mecca where he was born and brought up and then for ten years he lived in Medina among a people who were not of his kith and kin, and again in pursuance of Divine command marched forth to conquer Mecca at the head of an army of ten thousand saints to fulfil another prophecy of the Bible (Deut. 33:2).

2909. Commentary :

The present verse continues the theme of the preceding two verses and purports to say that God spoke to Moses at the side of Mount Sinai, giving him the glad tidings that a Prophet like unto him would appear among the brethren of the Israelites (Deut. 18 : 18). It further implies that it was not possible for the Holy Prophet first to have caused Moses to make a prophecy concerning him and then to have claimed to have come in fulfilment of that prophecy. The verse emphasizes the fact that one Prophet (Moses) made a prophecy concerning another Prophet (the Holy Prophet) about two thousand years ago in a place far away from the scene of

48. And were it not that if an affliction should befall them because of what their hands have sent before *them*, they would say, "Our Lord, wherefore didst Thou not send a Messenger to us that we might have followed Thy Signs, and been of the believers?" *We should not have sent thee as Messenger.*²⁹¹⁰

49. But when the truth has come to them from Us, they say, ^b"Why has he not been given the like of what was given to Moses?" Did they not reject that which was given to Moses before? They say, 'Two works of sorcery—the *Torah* and the *Qur'an*—that back up each other.' And they say, 'We disbelieve in all.'²⁹¹¹

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ
فَيَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ
وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا لَوْلَا أُوتِيَ
مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ أَوْ لَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ
مِنْ قَبْلُ قَالُوا سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلِّ
كُفْرُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

^a20 : 135.

^b6 : 125.

the activities of the latter, and that that prophecy was literally fulfilled in him. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the maker of the prophecy, and he about whom the prophecy was made were both true Prophets of God.

2910. Commentary :

The sense implied in the verse is that by their iniquities and transgressions the disbelievers render themselves deserving of God's punishment but as it is inconsistent with His justice and mercy to punish them without first giving them an opportunity to reform themselves, so He raises a Prophet among them so that when punishment should overtake them they might not say that they were not given an opportunity to reform themselves by following the Divine Prophet if one had appeared among

them.

2911. Commentary :

It is customary with disbelievers in the time of every Prophet that they demand from him Signs and miracles which had been shown by a previous Prophet, while the disbelievers of that very Prophet had also rejected him in spite of the fact that he had shown the same miracles which disbelievers in the time of the later Prophet demanded. The verse exposes the absurdity of this worn-out demand of disbelievers and purports to say that they demand from the Holy Prophet the same teachings which were given to Moses while the spiritual needs and requirements of the Holy Prophet's time are different from those of Moses and, therefore, their demand is foolish. Yet when they are told that prophecies which were made by Moses have been fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet and that

50. Say, 'Then bring a Book from Allah which is a better guide than these two *Books*, that I may follow it, if you are truthful.'²⁹¹²

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا
اتَّبِعْهُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. "But if they answer thee not, then know that they only follow their own evil inclinations. And who is more erring than he who follows his evil inclinations without any guidance from Allah? Verily, Allah guides not the unjust people.

فَإِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

R.6 52. And We have, indeed, thoroughly conveyed to them the Word, that they may be admonished.²⁹¹³

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

11 : 15.

the teachings of the Qur'ān in many respects support and corroborate the teachings of Torah, they say that both the Qur'ān and the Torah are two pieces of magic that support each other.

2912. **Commentary :**

The verse alludes to the very high position which both the Qur'ān and the Torah hold among heavenly Scriptures, the Qur'ān being *par excellence* the best among the revealed Books and the Torah standing only second to it. It further says to disbelievers that if the revelations of the Qur'ān and the Torah do not satisfy them, then let them produce a Book which is better suited to be humanity's guide and which has brought about greater transformation in the lives of men than these Books have done.

2913. **Important Words :**

وصلنا (thoroughly conveyed) is transitive verb from وصل (wasala). They say وصل الى المكان i.e.

he came, reached or attained the place. وصل الشيئ بالشئ (wassala) means, he joined or connected one thing with the other وصله اليه او أوصاله means, he conveyed it to him (wassala-hū) means, he conveyed it to him (Aqrab).

Commentary :

In view of the two significations of the word وصل given under "Important Words" the verse may have the following two interpretations : (1) We have joined one revelation with another, which means that God has been sending His Messengers and revelations one after the other. The Qur'ān has also been revealed quite in harmony with this time-honoured Divine practice. It has come after the Torah which had made a prophecy about it (Deut. 18 : 18) and whose prophecies it has fulfilled and whose basic principles it supports.

(2) The Word of God, i.e. the Qur'ān, has been fully conveyed to the Meccans and thoroughly explained to them.

53. Those to whom We gave the Book before it—they believe in it.²⁹¹⁴

54. "And when it is recited unto them, they say, 'We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed, even before it we had submitted ourselves to God.'²⁹¹⁵

55. These will be given their reward twice, for they have been steadfast and^bthey repel evil with good, and spend out of what We have given them.²⁹¹⁶

56. "And when they hear vain talk, they turn away from it and say, 'Unto us our works and unto you your works. Peace be to you. ^dWe seek not the ignorant.'

57. "Surely, thou wilt not be able to guide *all* whom thou lovest; but Allah guides whomsoever He pleases; and He knows best those who would accept guidance.²⁹¹⁷

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

وَإِذَا يُنْطَلَعُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّنَا

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَ

يَدْعُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةِ وَمِنَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَإِذَا سَبَّحُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا

وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ

يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

^a13 : 37; 39 : 12; 72 : 21. ^b13 : 23; 23 : 97; 41 : 35. ^c23 : 4; 25 : 73. ^d25 : 64.
^e12 : 104 ; 16 : 38.

2914. Commentary :

The word الكتاب referring to Torah or to every revealed Book, the verse may either mean, (1) that those who have been given a right understanding of the Book—the Torah, and ponder over it are sure to believe in it—the Qur'ān; or (2) that from among the followers of every revealed Book,—the Jews, the Christians the Zoroastrians, the Hindus, etc., a large section will believe in the Qur'ān and join the fold of Islam during the ages. In this sense the verse embodies a prophecy about the eventual triumph of Islam over all other Faiths.

2915. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when prophecies about the revelation of the Qur'ān and the Holy

Prophet are recited to them—"the People of the Book," the God-fearing among them believe in it—the Qur'ān—saying that they had already expected such a revelation to come.

2916. Commentary :

The verse means to say that such persons from among "the People of the Book" as believe in the Qur'ān will have double reward for the belief both in the Torah and the Qur'ān and also for suffering patiently for the cause of truth and for their perseverance and steadfastness under trials and tribulations.

2917. Commentary :

The verse shows how anxious the Holy Prophet was that all those to whom he addressed his Message should have believed in him and

58. And they say, 'If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land.' Have We not established for them a safe sanctuary, "to which are brought the fruits of all things, as a provision from Us? But most of them know not.²⁹¹⁸

59. ^bAnd how many a township have We destroyed which exulted in its *manner of life*! And these are their dwellings which have not been inhabited after them except a little. ^cAnd it is We Who become the inheritors thereof.²⁹¹⁹

وَقَالُوا إِن تَتَّبِعِ الْهُدَىٰ مَعَكَ نُتَخَفَّ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا
أَوَلَمْ نُنَكِّسْ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا آمِنًا يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّن لَّدُنَّا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ بَطَرَتْ مَعِيشَتَهَا فَإِنَّكَ
مَسْكِنُهُمْ لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا وَ
كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

^{a2} : 127; 14 : 38.

^{b7} : 5; 21 : 12; 22 : 46; 65 : 9. ^{c15} : 24; 19 : 41.

thus should have saved themselves from the evil consequences of rejecting the Divine message. See also 18 : 7.

2918. Commentary :

The verse seeks to dispel the unfounded fears particularly of those Meccans who think that if they accepted the new Message, more powerful people will swoop down upon them and deprive them of their possessions and freedom. It purports to say that from time immemorial Mecca (which is now going to be the centre of the new Faith) has remained a safe sanctuary and those who ever sought to interfere with its sacred character themselves met with ruin and destruction. When such is the case why should the Meccans be afraid that if they accepted the new Faith they will suffer economically or politically? The fact that Mecca has remained a safe sanctuary throughout the ages amidst all the great changes that have come over the face of the earth bears a standing testimony to the truth of the prophecy that God has made it a haven of safety.

2919. Important Words :

بطر (exulted) is feminine gender from بطر which means, he exulted; or exulted greatly or excessively and behaved insolently, or he exulted by reason of wealth and behaved with pride. بطرت means, thou exultest excessively and behavest insolently in thy manner of life. بطرت في معيشتها in reality is بطرت مَعِيشَتَهَا which means, it exulted in its manner or means of life. بطر الحق means, he held the favour in light estimation and was ungrateful for it. بطر الحق means, he disdainfully rejected the truth (Lane & Aqrab). See also 8 : 48.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that the Meccans fear that if they accepted the new Message, they will be deprived of their property and possessions by more wealthy and powerful peoples. But they seem to ignore the fact that there had lived in the past peoples who were more powerful and wealthier and possessed superior civilizations than the people of whom the Meccans are afraid and yet when those people rejected the truth and

60. "And thy Lord would never destroy the towns until He has raised in the mother-town thereof a Messenger, reciting unto them Our Signs; nor would We destroy the towns unless the people thereof are wrongdoers.²⁹²⁰

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى حَتَّى يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمَمٍ
رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَ مَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَى
إِلَّا وَ أَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. ^bAnd whatever of the things of *this world* you are given is only a temporary enjoyment of the present life and an adornment thereof; and that which is with Allah is better and more lasting. Will you not then understand?

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ
زِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَ أَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

7 62. Is he, then, to whom We have promised a goodly promise, *the fulfilment of which he will meet*, "like him whom We have provided with the good things of this life *only*, and then on the Day of Resurrection he will be among those who will be brought *to account before God*?"²⁹²¹

أَفَمَنْ وَعَدْنَاهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ لَاقِيهِ كُنَّا مَتَّعْنَاهُ
مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

^a6 : 132; 11 : 118; 20 : 135; 26 : 209. ^b3 : 15; 9 : 38; 10 : 71; 16 : 118; 40 : 40.

^c20 : 132; 26 : 206-208.

behaved proudly they were so completely wiped out from the face of the earth as if they had never lived on it, and those who were considered weak were made to take their place.

2920. Commentary :

Two laws have been enunciated in this verse: (1) No people are punished until God has first raised among them a Messenger who warns them of the impending punishment and exhorts them to repent and give up their evil ways. (2) No people are punished unless they have given themselves up to sin and iniquity and have completely closed the doors of repentance upon themselves.

The unusual frequency and universality of natural calamities in the form of famines, wars, earthquakes and epidemics during the last five or six decades call for the appearance of a Divine Messenger in the present time. That Divine Messenger appeared in the fulness of time in the person of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

2921. Commentary :

The present verse continues and further develops the theme of its predecessor. It purports to say, "let not those who are given only a temporary enjoyment of the good things

63. And on that day He will call to them, and say, "Where are those whom you claimed to be My associates?"

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ
كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Those against whom the sentence of punishment will have become due, will say, ^b"Our Lord, these are those whom we led astray. We led them astray, even as we had gone astray ourselves. We now dissociate ourselves from them and turn to Thee. ^c"It was not us that they worshipped."²⁹²²

قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ
أَغْوَيْنَا أَغْوَيْنَهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا تَبَرَّأْنَا إِلَيْكَ مَا
كَانُوا آيَاتِنَا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. And it will be said, ^d"Now call upon your so-called partners." And they will call upon them, but they will not answer them. And they will see the punishment. Would that they had followed the guidance!

وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا
لَهُمْ وَرَأُوا الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. And on that day He will call to them and say, "What answer did you give to the Messengers?"

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

28 : 75; 41 : 48. ^b7 : 39, 40; 14 : 22, 33 : 68-69; 34 : 32-33; 40 : 48-49.
^c10 : 29; 16 : 87. ^d10 : 29-30; 16 : 87. ^e5 : 110 7 ; 7.

of this life deceive themselves into the false notion that the good things will last for ever. In their very nature they are temporary but the fact that those who have been provided with material amenities and comforts have defied and flouted God's message and rejected His Messenger has lessened their tenure all the more and in addition the disbelievers will be punished in this world and the next."

2922. Commentary :

The words, "those against whom the sentence will have become due," refer to the leaders of disbelief whom the misguided people blindly

follow. Or the words may apply only to those associate-gods who themselves will be under Divine punishment and not to all those whom the idolaters worshipped because some of the righteous and God-fearing men have also been made the object of worship by their misguided followers.

The words, "it was not us they worshipped," mean that the leaders of disbelief would say that their so-called followers did not worship them but only their own ideas and fancies, i.e., it was because of their own false and foolish beliefs that they were led astray from the path of truth and righteousness.

67. Then all excuses will become obscure to them on that day, and they shall not *even* ask each other.²⁹²³

68. "But as for him who repents and believes and does righteous deeds, maybe he will be among the prosperous."²⁹²⁴

فَعَيَّتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْآبَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَأَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَحَسْبُهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ

مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

^a20 : 83; 25 : 72.

2923. Important Words :

عميت (will become obscure) is formed from عمى which means, he was or became blind; he was or became spiritually blind; he failed to see a thing; he was or became stupid or ignorant. They say عمى عليه الامر i.e. the affair became obscure or confused to him. عميت الاخبار عن فلان means, news or information became hidden to such a one (Aqrab & Lane).

انباء (excuses) is the plural of نبأ which means, important news; information; message; excuse (Lane, Aqrab & Kulliyāt). See also 6 : 6.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that at the time of reckoning the disbelievers will be in utter confusion and despair and will be completely at a loss how to defend themselves. The untenability of all false pleas and excuses will become manifest to them, and they will not be allowed to consult each other for the sake of preparing their defence.

2924. Important Words :

عسى (maybe) meaning, it may be that, maybe or perhaps, is a word which expresses eager desire or hope and fear, sometimes with

reference to the person addressed and sometimes with reference to the speaker himself. It denotes hope in the case of that which is liked and fear in the case of that which is disliked. It also denotes opinion or doubt, and certainty. When used by persons of very high authority the object is to engender hope but not over-confidence in the person or persons with reference to whom it is used. In the opinion of most Commentators of the Qur'ān the words لعلى and عسى when used with reference to God denote certainty because uncertainty and expectancy cannot be attributed to God. Imām Rāghib, however, differs from this view and says that in the Qur'ān these words are used to express hope only on the part of the person or persons with reference to whom they are used (Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

The verse shows that according to Islam the door of repentance always remains open. The sinner can repent even with the last breath of life. He is never beyond redemption except when by persistent rejection of truth he himself deliberately chooses to shut the door of repentance upon him.

69. And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases, and chooses *whomsoever He pleases*. It is not for them to choose. Glorified be Allah, and He is far above all that they associate *with Him*.²⁹²⁵

70. "And thy Lord knows what their breasts conceal, and what they reveal.

71. And He is Allah; there is no god but He. To Him belongs all praise in the beginning and the Hereafter. His is the judgment, and to Him shall you be brought back.²⁹²⁶

72. Say, 'Tell me, if Allah make the night continue over you till the Day of Resurrection, what god is there besides Allah who could bring you light? Will you not then hearken?'

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِضِيَاءٍ
أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

^{a2} : 78; 11 : 6; 16 : 24; 36 : 77.

2925. Commentary :

Whereas in the preceding several verses polytheism has been condemned and denounced, the present and the following few verses give the reasons for this denunciation and condemnation. The most effective argument against polytheism is that God is All-Knowing, All-Powerful and is the sole Creator of the whole universe. He depends on no one for help or advice in the control and direction of the affairs of the universe and His wisdom being infallible His choice in all things is unfettered.

The expression *عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ* may mean: (1) He is far above being associated with other

persons and things as equal; (2) He is far above those persons or things which the idolaters associate with Him as His equal.

2926. Commentary :

The words, "To Him belongs all praise in the beginning and the Hereafter," signify that it is not possible to begin a work unless God provides the means for it and that no work can become complete unless He has provided the means for its completion, and that it can produce no result without His help. The expression *الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرَةِ* may also signify respectively the Mosaic and Islamic Dispensations.

73. Say, 'Tell me, if Allah make the day continue over you till the Day of Resurrection, what god is there besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you could rest? Will you not then see?'²⁹²⁷

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِبَلِيلٍ
تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

74. "And of His mercy He has made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful."²⁹²⁸

وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا
فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

75. And on that day He will call to them and say, "Where are those whom you claimed to be My associates?"²⁹²⁹

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ
تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

76. "And We shall draw from every people a witness and We shall say, 'Bring your proof.' Then they will know that the truth belongs to Allah. And that which they used to forge will all be lost unto them.

وَنَرْعُنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

^a10 : 68; 17 : 13; 27 : 87; 30 : 24.

^b16 : 28; 18 : 53; 28 : 63; 41 : 48. ^c4 : 42; 16 : 85.

2927. Commentary :

While speaking of "the day" as in the present verse, the Qur'ān uses the words "will you not then see" and when speaking of "the night" as in the preceding verse it uses the words, "will you not then hearken," the reason being that one cannot properly see at night.

2928. Commentary :

Whereas both perpetual work and perpetual rest are injurious for man's physical health, periodical rest in the form of the night and periodical work in the shape of the day are great boons of God. At night our jaded and tired limbs are rested and we are able with re-

newed vigour to do the next day's work and in the day we work and earn our livelihood. Thus their alternation constitutes a great Divine blessing.

'Day' may also be compared to the period of glory and prosperity in the life of a nation and 'night' to the time of its decline and decadence. 'Day' may also signify the time when Divine Reformer is present in the world and 'night' the time of spiritual darkness.

2929. Commentary :

After a brief mention about the powers and favours of God, made in the preceding few verses, the present verse reverts to the subject of the futility of idol-worship and puts forth these

٢. 8 77. "Verily, Korah was of the people of Moses, but he behaved tyrannically towards them. And We had given him treasures of hoarded wealth so much that the stores thereof would have weighed down a party of strong men. When his people said to him, 'Exult not, surely Allah loves not those who exult.'²⁹³⁰

تَقَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى فَبَغَى عَلَيْهِمْ وَآتَيْنَاهُ
بِالنُّزُومِ إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوءُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولَى
لِقُوَّةٍ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفَرِحِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

29 : 40; 40 : 25.

Divine powers and favours as an argument in support of the Unity of God.

2930. Important Words :

كنوز (treasures of hoarded wealth) is the plural of كنز which is noun-inf. from كنز (kanaza). They say كنز المال i.e., he buried the property or treasure in the earth; he hoarded it, or stored, or he collected the property and treasured it. كنز therefore, means, treasure, property buried in the earth; property that is preserved in a receptacle; that receptacle in which property is buried or preserved or hoarded; treasure-boxes; anything abundant and collected together (Lane & Aqrab).

مفاتيح (stores) is the plural of مفتاح (maftah) which is derived from فتح. They say فتح الباب i.e. he opened the door. مفتاح (maftah) means, a hoard; a treasure, a store or store-room or magazine; buried property. مفتاح (miftah) of which مفاتيح also is the plural and مفتاح (plural مفاتيح) mean a key (Lane & Aqrab).

لتنوء (would have weighed down) is derived from ناء which means, he rose or rose with difficulty and effort under a load; he was oppressed by

weight and fell down. ناء به حمله means, he rose with his burden with effort and difficulty. به الحمل means, the burden weighed him down (Aqrab).

Commentary :

It would appear that Korah was an Israelite who stood high in the favour of Pharaoh and held one of the principal offices of State under him. Very likely he was Pharaoh's treasurer. When Pharaoh went on official tour the royal treasures were probably transported under Korah's charge. In order to safeguard his position and to win further favours from Pharaoh, Korah seemed to have persecuted his own people and behaved haughtily and tyrannically towards them.

The name of Qārūn (Korah) seems also to have been symbolically used here for men of material wealth. Abundance of riches has proved the undoing of many a man. Elated with riches and wealth and lulled into a false sense of security, wealthy people are prone to reject God's message and defy His Prophets. Korah as it appears from the Bible (Num. 16 : 1-35), was a believer in Moses. According to Rabbinical literature he was fabulously rich (Jew. Enc.) and in the pride of wealth revolted against Moses and Aaron and consequently perished with his 250 followers, the earth having swallowed them up.

78. 'And seek, in that which Allah has given thee, the Home of the Hereafter; and neglect not thy lot in this world; and do good *to others* as Allah has done good to thee; and seek not to make mischief in the earth, verily, Allah loves not those who make mischief.'²⁹³¹

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ
نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ
إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

79. 'He said, 'This has been given to me because of the knowledge I possess.' Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him generations that were mightier than he and greater in riches? And the guilty shall not be asked *to offer an explanation* of their sins.'²⁹³²

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيَتْهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ
اللَّهُ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ
مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

80. So he went forth before his people in all his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of this world said, 'Would that we had the like of what Korah has been given! Truly, he is the master of a great fortune.'

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَلِيتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ
إِنَّهُ لَدُونُ حَظِّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

439 : 50.

2931. Commentary :

Islam does not view with favour such flight from the world as Christianity inculcates among its votaries. One should not deny one's portion of the good things of the world. As a matter of fact at another place in the Qur'ān the believers are enjoined to pray to God "to grant them the good things of this world as well as the good things of the world to come" (2: 202), only the pursuit of the good things of this world should not make one neglect the seeking of the good things of the Hereafter. Islam is not a

religion of monks and recluses but of pious and righteous men of the world.

2932. Commentary :

The expression *ولا يسأل عن ذنوبهم المجرمون* may mean that the guilt of the disbelievers will be so patent that no further investigation will be considered necessary to establish it; or it may mean that the guilty will not be given an opportunity to defend themselves or to redress the wrong done by them, their sins and crimes being all too apparent.

81. But those who had been given knowledge said, 'Woe unto you, Allah's reward is best for those who believe and do good works; and it shall be granted to none except those who are steadfast.'

82. "Then We caused the earth to swallow him up and his dwelling; and he had no party to help him against Allah, nor was he of those who can defend themselves."²⁹³³

83. "And those who had coveted his position the day before began to say, 'Ah! ^bit is indeed Allah Who enlarges the provision for such of His servants as He pleases and straitens *it for whom He pleases*. Had not Allah been gracious to us, He would have caused it to swallow us up *also*. Ah! the ungrateful never prosper."²⁹³⁴

٢. 9 84. "This is the Home of the Hereafter! We give it to those who desire not self-exaltation in the earth, nor corruption. And the *good* end is for the righteous.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
لِّمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ
تَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيْكَانَ
اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ
لَوْ لَا أَنَّ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا وَيْكَانَ لَهُ لَا يَفْلَحُ
الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

^a29 : 41. ^b13 : 27; 29 : 63; 34 : 37. ^c7 : 170; 16 : 31.

2933. Important Words :

خَسَفْنَا (We caused him to be swallowed up) is formed from خَسَفَ the مكان *i.e.* the house fell down or sank into the earth. خَسَفَ القمر means, the moon suffered an eclipse. خَسَفَ الرجل means, the man became emaciated. خَسَفَ فلاناً means, he humbled him and made him to bear a thing which he did not like. خَسَفَ الله الأرض بفلان means, God made the earth to sink with such a one and to swallow him up (Lane & Aqrab).

2934. Important Words :

ويك (Ah). ويك is a compound expression made up of وي and ك and is used for surprise and reproach, وي meaning woe and ك being a letter of address. They say ويك *i.e.* woe to thee. Some say ويك is ويلك (thy perdition), ل having been omitted. ويك being an expression of surprise or reproach means, oh; ah. وي لزيد also means, well done Zaid, bravo Zaid (Aqrab).

85. "He who does a good deed shall have better reward than that; and *as for him* who does an evil deed—those who do evil deeds shall not be rewarded but *according to* what they did."²⁹³⁵

86. Most surely, He Who has made *the teaching of* the Qur'ān binding on thee will bring thee back to *thy* place of return. Say, ^b"My Lord knows best who has brought the guidance, and who is in manifest error."²⁹³⁶

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ
فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَى مَعَادٍ
قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَى وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي
ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٨٦﴾

^a4 : 124; 6 : 161; 17 : 8; 41 : 47; 99 : 8-9. ^b17 : 85.

2935. Commentary :

The verse points to the Divine law of compensation which in this life works in this way that whereas for good works God gives a reward many times greater than what the doer has earned, He punishes a bad deed with a punishment which is less than what the guilty person has incurred or at the most with a punishment proportionate to the evil deed which he has committed.

2936. Important Words :

فَرَضَ (made binding) means, He (God) made a thing obligatory or binding by a known decree. عَادَ لَهُ means, he appointed to him a thing. عَادَ لَهُ means, God has instituted or prescribed for His servants ordinances and commandments (Lane & Aqrab).

مَعَادَ (place of return) is derived from عَادَ. They say عاد إليه i.e. he returned to it. مَعَادَ means, a place to which a person returns; a place, state or result to which a person or thing eventually comes; a place of destination or an ultimate state or condition (Mecca is so called because the pilgrims return to it again and again); Paradise; Pilgrimage; Hereafter (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

This verse is considered by some scholars to have been revealed while the Holy Prophet was on his way from Mecca to Medina. It embodied a great prophecy, viz., that the Holy Prophet one day will have to leave Mecca and then eventually he will come back to it as a victor and conqueror, and the fulfilment of this mighty prophecy under extraordinary circumstances will show "who has brought the guidance, and who is in manifest error." The verse constitutes a befitting sequel to the *Sūra* which gives a somewhat detailed life-story of Moses, the counterpart of the Holy Prophet. Moses fled from Egypt and lived in Midian for ten years which were years of preparation for the great task which lay ahead of him. Then he went back to Egypt with the Divine message and succeeded in delivering the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh. Similarly, the Holy Prophet fled from Mecca and spent ten precious years of his life in Medina which were the years of preparation for the great object of conquering Mecca, the centre and citadel of his Faith. He returned to it as a conqueror and victor and

87. And thou didst never expect that the Book would be revealed to thee; ^abut it is a mercy from thy Lord; so never be a helper of those who disbelieve.^{2936A}

88. And let them not turn thee away from the Signs of Allah, after they have been sent down to thee; and call *mankind* to thy Lord, and be not of those who associate *equals* with Him.²⁹³⁷

89. ^bAnd call not on any other god beside Allah. There is no god but He. Everything will perish save that to which He directs His attention. His is the judgment, and to Him will you be brought back.²⁹³⁸

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً
مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ ۚ

وَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنْزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ
وَادْعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۚ

وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ
شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ۚ

^a17 : 88. ^b10 : 107 ; 17 : 40 ; 26 : 214.

fully succeeded in the achievement of his great object.

2936A. Commentary :

See next verse.

2937. Commentary :

The verse sums up the subject-matter of the *Sūra*. The Holy Prophet is told that he did not have the remotest idea that he would ever be made the bearer of the Divine message but now that he has actually been entrusted with the great and difficult task of preaching the truth, he should 'call mankind to God' and like a great soldier fight his way to success.

2938. Important Words :

وجه means ; face ; the thing itself ; direction ; object and motive ; deed or action to which a

person directs his attention ; the desired way (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In this verse the Holy Prophet is told that he will meet with strong opposition and severe persecution in the discharge of his great mission but no amount of trials and tribulations should discourage or dismay him and he should put his faith in Allah Who is at his back and to Whom all will return.

The expression كل شيء هالك إلا وجهه may mean: (1) Everything will perish save that to which He directs His attention. (2) Everything will perish save that by which His pleasure is sought. The verse signifies that only material things will perish and not the blessings or bounties of Paradise which are everlasting.

CHAPTER 29

AL-'ANKABŪT

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

This *Sūra* is generally considered to have been revealed at Mecca, though according to some scholars. Ibn 'Abbās being one of them, the first ten verses were revealed at Medina. A large majority of them, however, are inclined towards placing its revelation in the middle or the late middle Meccan period.

The *Sūra* seems to derive its title from v. 40 in which the falsity and futility of polytheistic beliefs of idolaters is brought home to them by a beautiful parable. It is stated that these beliefs are like a spider's web and being as frail and brittle as the web they cannot stand intelligent criticism.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

Towards the end of the preceding *Sūra* Muslims were told that they would meet strong opposition and severe persecution in the discharge of their great and difficult task of preaching the Unity of God, but they should not get discouraged and dismayed by the hardships and privations they will have to suffer. When everything except God is subject to decay and death, why should they be afraid of disbelievers and why should they not establish their connection with Him by turning to Whom man can get eternal life and peace which knows no end or diminution?

Subject-Matter

The present *Sūra* continues and develops this theme and proceeds to say that the great favours and blessings which are to be bestowed upon believers in this and the next life will not be conferred upon them unless their belief is put to a severe test. They are warned that they will have to pass through the crucible of fire and blood to deserve them. On the other hand, those who oppose truth and do evil deeds will never be able to frustrate God's plan and escape His punishment, and if they entertain any such foolish hope, they are doomed to severe disillusionment. It is only by true and sincere repentance and by turning to God with a humble and contrite heart and by bringing about real and abiding reformation in one's conduct and behaviour, that a man can earn God's forgiveness and become entitled to His boons and blessings.

Reverting to the subject of the persecution of believers the *Sūra* proceeds to say that no amount of hardships and privations should be allowed to stand in the way of accepting the truth;

even children are exhorted to place their loyalty to God above the loyalty to their parents when the two loyalties clash and conflict. But it is to be regretted that fear of men and consideration of worldly connections and relationships are shown greater regard than the fear of God's displeasure. Then brief references are made to the life-stories of the Prophets Noah, Abraham, Lot and some other Divine Messengers, to show that persecution can never arrest or retard the progress of the true Faith and that compulsion in matters of religion never pays and a people cannot be compelled permanently to continue to subscribe to views forcibly imposed upon them. The *Sūra* further says that polytheistic beliefs being as frail as a spider's web cannot stand intelligent and searching criticism, therefore the votaries of false gods have never been known to succeed in their evil designs to frustrate God's plan and purpose.

Next, disbelievers are told that they have no reason or justification to continue to hold idolatrous beliefs when a Book like the Qur'ān has been revealed which fully meets all the moral needs and requirements of man and is eminently fitted to raise him to the highest pinnacles of spiritual glory. The *Sūra* further disposes of an oft-quoted objection of disbelievers that the Qur'ān has been composed by the Holy Prophet. They say that it is unbelievable that a man who could neither read nor write and therefore legitimately was not expected to possess knowledge of the old revealed Scriptures, should have been able to produce a Book which not only contains what is of permanent value in earlier Books but comprises all those universal truths and teachings that are calculated to satisfy the moral and spiritual needs and requirements of humanity for all time to come. The Qur'ān is then presented as the greatest Divine miracle in answer to the disbelievers' demand for Signs and miracles, and after arraigning and reprimanding them for demanding punishment instead of accepting the Holy Prophet, it tells them that, while it is God alone Who decides when to send punishment, when punishment came, it "would overwhelm them from above them and from under their feet."

The *Sūra* closes with the subject with which it had begun. The believers are consoled and comforted that if they remained steadfast under the persecution to which they are subjected a great and bright future lies in store for them. They will have wealth, comforts and honour far in excess of what they had to give up for the sake of God. The *Sūra* ends on the note that the believers will have to take up the sword in defence of Islam and to conduct vigorous Jihād against the forces of evil but the real Jihād, it says, does not consist in killing and being killed but in striving hard to win the pleasure of God and in preaching the Message of the Qur'ān by peaceful means.

سُورَةُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٩)

1. ^aIn the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.²⁹³⁹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bAlif Lām Mīm.^{2939A}

الْمُرَّ ②

3. ^cDo men think that they will be left alone because they say, ‘We believe,’ and that they will not be tried?²⁹⁴⁰

أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ③

4. And We did try those who were before them. So Allah will surely distinguish those who are truthful and He will surely distinguish the liars from the truthful.²⁹⁴¹

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ④

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b2 : 2; 3 : 2; 13 : 2; 30 : 2; 31 : 2; 32 : 2. ^c3 : 180 ; 9 : 16.

2939. Commentary :

See. 1 : 1.

2939A, Commentary :

The present and the following three Chapters are headed by the abbreviated letters (مقطعات) Alif Lām Mīm. For an explanation and significance of these letters, in fact for all abbreviations placed at the head of any *Sūra*, see note under 2 : 2 & 19 : 2. The above three letters stand for انا الله أعلم *i.e.* I am Allah, the All-Knowing. See also 30 : 2.

2940. Commentary :

The preceding *Sūra* ended on the note that the Holy Prophet will come back as victor and conqueror to his native town, Mecca, from where he had been driven out as a friendless fugitive. The present *Sūra* opens with the warning to believers that long, hard work and hardships

and privations patiently borne are the *sine qua non* of success in life. This law applies as much to communities and nations as to individuals. Mere lip-profession of faith is not enough. Individuals and communities have to go through the fire of trials and tribulations to achieve their ends. The greater and harder the sacrifice, the more glorious and enduring the success.

2941. Commentary :

The verse means to say that believers are made to pass through great hardships and privations and that their belief is put to a severe test, and after they come out of the ordeal successful the fact becomes established that they are true and sincere servants of God, and thus they are distinguished from the hypocrites and from those who are false in their profession of faith.

5. Or do those who commit evil deeds think that they will escape Us? Evil is what they judge.²⁹⁴²

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْفِقُونَهُ
سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

6. "Whoso hopes to meet Allah, let him be prepared for it, for Allah's appointed time is certainly coming. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.²⁹⁴³

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ أَجَلَ اللَّهُ لَاتٍ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

7. And whoso strives, strives only for his own soul; verily, Allah is Independent of all creatures.²⁹⁴⁴

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ
عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

⁴² : 224; 11 : 30; 18 : 111; 84 : 7.

علم (*‘Ilm*) which means knowledge, is of two kinds. One kind of knowledge consists in knowing a thing before it comes into existence. This kind of knowledge is not meant here because God is عالم الغيب والشهادة *i.e.* He is the Knower of the seen and the unseen (59 : 23). The other kind of knowledge consists in knowing an event after it has actually taken place. It is in this sense that the expression فليعلمن has been used in the present verse. The expression signifies that the primeval knowledge of God will take the form of matter-of-fact knowledge. Or it means that God will distinguish between the liars and the truthful as the word علم (*‘Ilm*) also possesses the sense of distinguishing between two things, particularly when it is followed by the particle من *i.e.* from. See also 2 : 144 & 3 : 141.

2942. Commentary :

The expression "will escape Us" has been used in this verse in one of the following two senses:

- (1) they will frustrate Our plan;
- (2) they will escape Our punishment.

2943. Important Words :

يرجو (hopes) is derived from رجا. They say رجا الشيئ *i.e.* he hoped to get the thing: he deferred or delayed it; he feared it. رجا الرجل means, he granted the man respite or he deferred the matter regarding him. When used in the sense of hoping, the word is used on those occasions when the thing hoped for is likely to afford pleasure (Mufradāt & Aqrab).

2944. Commentary :

As against the wrong construction deliberately placed on Jihād by some prejudiced Christian Orientalists, the primary significance of this word, as is apparent from this verse, is 'to strive.' It is in this sense that the word has been frequently used in the *Sūras* revealed at Mecca where fighting with the sword was out of the question. As to the significance of Jihād by the sword and the circumstances under which it is allowed and the conditions that govern its conduct and continuance, see 22 : 40.

8. And *as to*^athose who believe and do righteous deeds We shall surely remove from them their evils, and We shall surely give them the best reward of their works.²⁹⁴⁵

9. ^bAnd We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; but if they strive to make thee associate that with Me of which thou hast no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, and I shall inform you of what you did.²⁹⁴⁶

10. And those who believe and do righteous deeds—^cthem We shall surely admit into *the company of the righteous*.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ⑧

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَلَكَ
لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ إِلَىٰ
مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ⑨

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي
الصَّالِحِينَ ⑩

^a2 : 83; 3 : 58; 13 : 30; 22 : 57; 30 : 16; 35 : 8; 42 : 23; 47 : 13. ^b2 : 84; 4 : 37; 6 : 152;
17 : 24; 19 : 15; 31 : 15; 46 : 16. ^c14 : 24; 22.

2945. Commentary:

This verse gives a brief but very apt description of a *Mujāhid*,—a true striver in the way of God. High and noble ideals and consistent and constant effort to carry out those ideals into actual practice is what in Islamic terminology is called *Jihād*, and the person who possesses these noble ideals and lives up to them is a *Mujāhid* in the true sense of the word.

Man's good actions are of different degrees. Some are better than others, yet some others are of the noblest quality. The expression ليَجْزِيَهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ signifies that God will reward all the good works of the believers whether good, better or of the highest quality as if they belonged to the last degree, *i.e.*, He will reward the good deeds of a believer, taking the

best of them as the basis of reward.

2946. Commentary :

The alpha and omega of all religious teachings is God's Unity. Man's loyalty, first and last is to his Creator. All other loyalties proceed from, and are subject to, this supermost of all loyalties. Even man's loyalty to his parents is not allowed to clash with it. No other Divine Scripture has laid so much emphasis on God's Oneness as the Qur'ān.

The immediate cause of the revelation of this verse is reported to have been that when Sa'd bin Waqqāṣ accepted Islam his mother threatened to starve herself to death if he did not renounce the new Faith. There was a clash of loyalties, and Sa'd, a firm believer as he was, refused to succumb to his mother's entreaties and threats.

11. And of men there are *some* who say, 'We believe in Allah,' but when they are made to suffer in the cause of Allah, they regard the persecution of men as if it were the punishment of Allah. 'And if help comes from thy Lord, they are sure to say, 'Certainly, we were with you.' Is not Allah best aware of what is in the breasts of all *His* creatures?²⁹⁴⁷

12. ^bAnd Allah will surely distinguish those who believe and He will surely distinguish the hypocrites *from the believers*.²⁹⁴⁸

13. And those who disbelieve say to those who believe, 'Follow our way, 'and we will surely bear your sins.' And they cannot bear aught of their sins. They are surely liars.²⁹⁴⁹

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي
اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِنْ جَاءَ
نَصْرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوْ لَيْسَ اللَّهُ
بَاعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ ۝

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا
وَلْنَحْمِلَ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ خَطِيئَتِهِمْ
مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۝

^a4 : 142.

^b3 : 142; 47 : 32.

^c14 : 22; 40 : 48.

2947. Commentary :

In contrast to the unflinching faith which early Muslims exhibited under the severest trials and which true believers have demonstrated in every age, there are always persons so weak of faith that they flinch under ordinary privations and are ready rather to renounce their faith than suffer loss. On the other hand they are always on the look-out to claim comradeship with believers when they see that Divine help is coming to them (believers) and the cause of truth is gaining ground.

2948. Commentary :

As mentioned in the preceding verse it is

God's practice that in order to try the mettle of believers and to distinguish them from hypocrites He makes them pass through the crucible of fire and blood.

2949. Commentary :

Besides the hypocrites there is another class of men—the aggressive leaders of disbelief, who, taking advantage of their own high social status, seek to mislead others who are not so highly placed in life, telling them that they will bear all the loss the latter will incur by accepting their lead and by refusing to accept the true new Faith.

14. "But they shall surely bear their own burdens, and *other* burdens along with their own burdens. And they will surely be questioned on the Day of Resurrection concerning that which they fabricated."²⁹⁵⁰

وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالًا مَّعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيَسْأَلُنَّ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ١٤

2 15. And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he dwelt among them a thousand years save fifty years. Then the Deluge overtook them, while they were wrongdoers."²⁹⁵¹

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ
سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَ
هُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ١٥

^a16 : 26.

2950. Commentary :

The verse alludes to the leaders of disbelief to whom a reference has also been made in the preceding verse and says that they will have to suffer the punishment for deluding and misleading others in addition to the punishment for their own disbelief and sins.

2951. Important Words :

سنة (year) is derived both from سنة and سنو. They say سنة الطعام *i.e.* the food rotted; or it rotted by the lapse of years. As derived from سنا this word (سنة) signifies "a simple revolution of the sun," *i.e.* a simple revolution of the earth round the sun. It is syn. with عام (and also حول) with this difference that whereas every سنة is an عام, every عام is not a سنة. It is also said to be longer than the عام which is applied to the twelve Arabian months collectively; but سنة is also applied to twelve revolutions of the moon. According to Imām Rāghib سنة is used as denoting a year in which there is difficulty, or drought or barrenness or dearth; and عام as denoting that in which is ampleness of the means or circumstances of life and abundance of herbage or the like. سنة also means, drought or

barrenness or vehement or intense drought. أصابتهم السنة means, drought, etc., befell them سنة سنه means, a year in which there is no herbage or rain. سنة سنه means, a hard, rigorous or distressing year (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In the verse under comment the age of Noah has been mentioned as 950 years. The Bible gives 952 years as His age. But it is difficult to assign a definite date as to when the Prophets of antiquity, such as Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, etc., lived and how long they lived. "None knows them save Allah," says the Qur'ān (14 : 10). Nine hundred and fifty years does not seem to be the span of Noah's life but the period of his Dispensation. In fact, the age of a Prophet is the age of his Dispensation and teaching. It is in this sense that We call the Holy Prophet Muḥammad the ever-living Prophet and Islam the ever-lasting religion. It appears from the Qur'ān (37 : 84) that Abraham was a follower of Noah. This means that Noah's period continued up to the time of Abraham or even to that of Joseph or of Moses.

16. "But We saved him and those who were *with him* in the Ark; ^band We made it a Sign for all peoples.

17. And *We sent* Abraham when he said to his people, 'Worship Allah and fear Him. That is better for you, if you only knew.

18. "You only worship idols beside Allah, and you forge a lie. Those whom you worship beside Allah have no power to provide sustenance for you. Then seek sustenance from Allah, and worship Him, and be grateful to Him. Unto Him will you be brought back.²⁹⁵²

19. 'And if you reject, then generations before you *also* rejected. And ^athe Messenger is only responsible for the clear conveying of *the message*.²⁹⁵³

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَأِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ
ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ
إِفْكَاطًا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِندَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ
وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۖ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَإِن كُذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَا
عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْبَيِّنُ ﴿١٩﴾

^a 10 : 74 ; 11 : 42. ^b23 : 31 ^c10 : 19; 16 : 72; 22 : 72. ^d16 : 36; 24 : 55; 36 : 18.

Noah's Dispensation seems to have lasted about 950 years. In describing the limit of Noah's age two words سنة and عام have been used. Whereas the root meaning of the former word possesses a sense of badness, that of latter has a sense of goodness. It seems that the first fifty years of Noah's Dispensation were years of all round spiritual progress and regeneration and after that moral decadence and degeneration set in and his people gradually became degraded morally, till their degeneration became complete in nine hundred years.

2952. Important Words :

تَخْلُقُونَ (you forge lies). تَخْلُقُونَ is formed from خَلَقَ . They say خَلَقَهُ i.e. he measured it,

or he determined its measure, or proportion, he designed, or fashioned, or planned it; he made it according to a certain measure, or design; He (God) created it; He originated it; he forged a story or lie; he fabricated a saying. An Arab would say حَدَّثَنَا فُلَانٌ بِأَحَادِيثِ الْخَافِ i.e. such a one related to us fictitious stories (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 50 & 26 : 138.

2953. Commentary :

After citing the cases of Noah and Abraham, the *Sūra* proceeds to comfort the Holy Prophet that if he has been rejected and accused of falsehood, great Prophets before him like Noah and Abraham were also rejected.

20. "See they not how Allah originates creation, then repeats it? That surely is easy for Allah.²⁹⁵⁴

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۚ
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Say, 'Travel in the earth, and see how He originated the creation. Then will Allah create the latter creation.' Surely, Allah has power over all things.²⁹⁵⁵

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ
ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢١﴾

^a10 : 35; 21 : 105; 27 : 65; 30 : 12, 28.

^b10 : 5, 30 : 28.

2954. Commentary :

In this verse the attention of disbelievers is drawn to the Divine law of creation and reproduction and they are told that God has designed and decreed that He would create through the Holy Prophet a new humanity and a new order on the ashes of the old one, and that if they persisted in their rejection of him they will be doomed and another people will take their place.

2955. Commentary :

The theme of the preceding verse has further been developed in this verse and the disbelievers are told just to have a glance over the histories of the nations that lived in the past and see that when God intended to create a new order and a new nation, He raised a new Prophet, and when his people rejected him they were destroyed and another people took their place. The Holy Prophet's rejectors are thus warned that if they did not take a lesson from the fate of the rejectors of former Prophets they will also come to

grief like them as the fact is writ large on the history of all religions that rejection of the Divine message always has landed the disbelievers into ruin.

The expressions *سَيَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ* (travel in the land) and *أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ* (have they not travelled in the land) have been used at several places in the Qur'ān (6 : 12; 12 : 110 ; 30 : 10; 35 : 45; 40 : 83), and almost everywhere they have been followed by a sentence which points to the terrible fate which the rejectors of the Divine message had met. This shows that in the present case also where this expression has been followed by the words "then see how He originated the creation, then will Allah create the latter creation," it points to the destruction of one people and the creation of another in their place. Thus the verse does not refer to Resurrection after death. It only draws attention to the phenomenon of the rise and decline of nations and their rise after their decline.

22. "He punishes whom He pleases and shows mercy unto whom He pleases; and to Him will you be turned back."^{2955A}

23. "And you cannot frustrate the designs of Allah in the earth nor in the heaven; nor have you any friend or helper beside Allah."²⁹⁵⁶

R. 3 24. "Those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah and the meeting with Him—it is they who have despaired of My mercy. And they will have a grievous punishment."

25. And the only answer of his people was that they said, "Slay him or burn him." But Allah saved him from the fire. In that surely are Signs for a people who would believe."²⁹⁵⁷

يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ
يَكْسِبُونَ سُوءًا مِنْ تَرْحَمَتِي وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ
فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

^a3 : 129; 5 : 41; 17 : 55. ^b10 : 54; 11 : 34; 42 : 32. ^c18 : 106; 30 : 17; 32 : 11. ^d21 : 69; 37 : 98.

2955A. Commentary :

As stated in many places in the Qur'ān, God does not punish arbitrarily but only after punishment has been fully deserved. This verse only means that God in His perfect knowledge well knows who has deserved punishment, and He punishes accordingly.

2956. Commentary :

The warning is conveyed to disbelievers in yet more emphatic words in this verse, that they cannot frustrate God's plan, and avert the terrible fate that is in store for them as the Divine decree has issued forth that Islam shall make progress and its cause shall triumph.

2957. Commentary :

Abraham's account began with the 17th verse and in the 18th verse he gave strong arguments in refutation of *Shirk*. From 19th to 24th verse, in consonance with the Quranic style and practice which adds to its elegance and beauty, a digression intervened and a great religious principle was briefly discussed in relation to the Holy Prophet. The principle discussed was that when one nation, as the result of its rejection of the Divine message, falls a victim to decay and decadence another people takes its place. From this verse the thread is taken up of Abraham's story.

26. And he said, 'Verily, you have taken for yourselves idols beside Allah, out of love for each other in the present life. Then on the Day of Resurrection "you will deny each other, and curse each other. And your abode will be the Fire; and you will have no helpers.' 2958

27. And Lot believed in him, and Abraham said, 'I flee unto my Lord; surely, He is the Mighty, the Wise.' 2959

28. And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and We placed *the gift of prophethood* and the Book among his descendants, and 'We gave him his reward in this life, and in the Hereafter he will surely be among the righteous.

وَقَالَ إِنَّا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَوَدَّةَ
بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ
بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَهُمُ
النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ٢٦

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ٢٧

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ
النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ٢٨

a16 : 87. b19 : 49. c11 : 72; 19 : 50; 21 : 73; 37 : 113. d2 : 131; 16 : 123.

2958. Commentary :

The expression مودة بينكم may be interpreted as follows:

(1) Social relations or the desire to win each other's love and not reason or sound arguments are the basis of your idolatrous ideals and practices; or

(2) you have made your idolatrous beliefs and practices the foundation of your love with each other, i.e. you have made the identity of your idolatrous beliefs the means to preserve the homogeneity of your community; or

(3) your idolatrous practices have proceeded from your love of each other, i.e. first you conceived love and affection for some persons and then let that love degenerate into their worship.

2959. Commentary :

The verse may mean that Abraham left his home in Ur in Iraq and migrated to Palestine, or the *Hijrat* referred to in the verse may have been spiritual. As it appears from 19: 49, 37 : 100 & 60 : 5, Abraham had, for some time, to sever all connections with his people on account of the severe opposition he met at their hands.

29. And *We sent* Lot. He said to his people, "You commit an abomination such as no one among mankind has ever committed before you.

وَلَوْ كُنَّا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ نَمًا
سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. "Do you approach men with lust and commit robbery on the highway? And you commit abomination in your meetings!" But the only answer of his people was that they said, 'Bring upon us the punishment of Allah if thou speakest the truth.'²⁹⁶⁰

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ ۚ وَ
تَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتُّبِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. He said, "Help me, my Lord, against the wicked people."

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

R. 4 32. "And when Our messengers brought Abraham the glad tidings, they *also* said, 'We are going to destroy people of this town; surely, its people are wrongdoers.'²⁹⁶¹

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا
مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنْ أَهْلُهَا كَانُوا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a7 : 81 ; 11 : 79. ^b7 : 82 ; 11 : 79 ; 26 : 166. ^c26 : 170. ^d11 : 70-71.

2960. Important Words :

تَقْطَعُونَ (commit robbery) is formed from قطع الشيء i.e. he cut off the thing; explained and expounded it. قطع عن حقه means, he deprived him of his right. قطع الصلوة means, he rendered the Prayer nugatory.

قطع الطريق على السالكين means, he made the way dangerous to the way-farers and forbade them to use it (Aqrah).

Commentary :

The expression تَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ means :

(a) you rob travellers on the highway. Lot's people had adopted the calling of the road; or

(b) you violate the Divinely appointed sex-laws and commit unnatural offences.

Three vices have been ascribed to the people of Lot in this verse : (1) unnatural vice; (2) highway robbery; and (3) committing crimes openly and unashamedly in their assemblies.

2961. Commentary :

The verse speaks of two things : (1) the glad tidings that the messengers brought to Abraham and (2) the warning that the people of the city of Lot were about to be destroyed. The glad tidings conveyed to Abraham was about the birth of a son and the cities to be destroyed were

33. He said, 'But Lot is there.' They said, 'We know full well who is there. ^a We will surely save him and his family, ^bexcept his wife, who is of those who remain behind.'

قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا إِنَّهُ
لَنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ
الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And when Our messengers came to Lot, ^che was distressed on their account and felt powerless with regard to them. And they said, 'Fear not, nor grieve. ^dGod says, "We will surely save thee and thy family except thy wife, who is of those who remain behind."²⁹⁶²

وَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِئَىٰ بِهِمْ
ذُرْعًا وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنْجُونَكَ وَأَهْلَكَ
إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a15 : 60; 51:36; ^b7 : 84; 15 : 61 ; 26 : 172; 27 : 58. ^c11 : 78. ^d7 : 84; 21 : 75; 27 : 58.

Sodom and Gomorrah. They were situated in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea on the road from Arabia to Syria. The road has been called سبيل مقيم (a road that still exists) in the Qur'ān (15 : 77). The Dead Sea is also called the Baḥr Lūt.

2962. Important Words :

سِئَى (he was distressed) is passive verb from ساء. They say ساء الامر فلاناً i.e. the affair grieved such a one; or did with him what he hated. ساء به ظنا means, he suspected him (Aqrab).

ضاق بهم ذرعا (felt helpless on their account). ضاق means, it was or became narrow. They say ضاق عن الجواب i.e. he was incapable of replying. The expression ضاق به ذرعا means, his power or ability was straitened or was inadequate to it or he was unable to do or accomplish the thing or he lacked strength or ability or power to do the thing (Lane).

Commentary :

Who the messengers mentioned in the verse were, what their mission was and why their visit distressed and grieved Prophet Lot has been explained in 11 : 70-71 & 15 : 68-72. It is enough for the purpose of the verse under comment to say that the messengers were righteous men of the locality and not angels as popularly believed, and that they had been commissioned by God to convey to Abraham and Lot the warning that Lot's people were about to be punished on account of their vices and iniquities and to take Lot to a place of safety. Lot was distressed when the messengers arrived because his people being robbers were apprehensive of strangers visiting their city and therefore they had forbidden Lot to receive outsiders. It may further be noted here that "the messengers" brought to Abraham the glad tidings of the birth of a son, and at the same time the tidings that the people of Lot were going to be destroyed, the word البشري being applied to both good and bad news.

35. ^a 'We are surely going to bring down on the people of this town a punishment from heaven, for they have been rebellious' ²⁹⁶³

إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ۝٣٥

36. ^b And We have left thereof a clear Sign for a people who would understand.

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ۝٣٦

37. ^c And to Midian *We sent* their brother Shu'aib who said, 'O my people serve Allah, and fear the Last Day and commit not iniquity in the earth, creating disorder.'

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۖ فَقَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْتَوُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ۝٣٧

38. ^d But they called him a liar. So a violent earthquake seized them, and in their homes they lay prostrate upon the ground. ²⁹⁶⁴

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ
جُثَيِّينَ ۝٣٨

39. And *We destroyed* 'Ād and Thamūd; and it is evident to you from their dwelling places. And Satan made their deeds *appear* fair to them, and thus turned them away from the *right* path, sagacious though they were. ²⁹⁶⁵

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُم مِّن مَّسْكِنِهِمُ زَيِّنَ
لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَ
كَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ ۝٣٩

^a27 : 59.

^b15 : 76; 51 : 38.

^c7 : 86; 11 : 85.

^d7 : 92; 11 : 95; 26 : 190.

^e9 : 70.

2963. Important Words :

رِجْزًا (punishment) is infinitive-noun from رَجَزَ (rajaza) and means, punishment; dirt or filth; iniquity or sin; idol-worship, etc., (Aqrab). See also 2 : 60.

2964. Commentary :

For the different kinds of Divine punishment which overtook the enemies of the Prophets who have been mentioned in this *Sūra*, see a collective note on v. 41 below.

2965. Important Words :

مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ is derived from بَصَرَ which means, he

saw; he perceived; he knew; he understood; he recognised. استَبْصَرَ الْأَمْرَ means, the affair became clear or manifest (Aqrab). See also 28 : 44.

Commentary :

In view of the different meanings of the root-word بَصَرَ the expression كَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ would mean: (1) the wickedness of the course 'Ād and Thamūd had adopted, had become quite clear to them; or (2) they clearly saw that the course they had adopted was wrong or (3) they deliberately adopted a course knowing full well what the end would be.

40. And *We destroyed* Korah and Pharaoh and Hāmān. ^aAnd Moses did come to them with manifest Signs, but they behaved proudly in the land, yet they could not outstrip *Us*.

41. So each one *of them* We seized for his sin; of them were those against whom We sent a violent sandstorm, and of them were those whom a roaring blast overtook, and of them were ^bthose whom We caused the earth to swallow up, and of them were those whom We drowned. ^cAnd Allah would not wrong them, but they used to wrong their own souls.²⁹⁶⁶

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَى
بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا
وَمِنْهُمْ مَن أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن خَسَفْنَا
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

^a28 : 37. ^b28 : 82; ^c16 : 34; 30 : 10.

2966. Commentary :

Whereas separate mention has been made in the few preceding verses of the peoples of the five great Prophets of God (Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot, Shu‘aib and Moses), the manner in which they treated their Prophets and of the Divine punishment that overtook them on account of their wicked behaviour, the present verse deals collectively with the different forms of punishment. The Qur’ān has used different words and expressions to describe the punishment which overtook the opponents of the various Prophets in their respective times. The punishment that came upon ‘Ād, is described as رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا *i.e.* furious wind (41 : 17 ; 54 : 20 & 69 : 7) and الريح العقيم *i.e.* destructive wind (51 : 42); that which overtook Thamūd, as رجفة *i.e.* earthquake (7 : 79), صيحة *i.e.* blast (11 : 68; 54 : 32), صاعقة *i.e.* thunderbolt (41 : 18) and طاغية *i.e.* violent blast (69 : 5); that which destroyed the people of Lot as

حجارة من سجيل *i.e.* stones of clay (11 : 83; 15 : 75), صيحة and حاصبا *i.e.* storm of stones (54 : 35); and that which overtook Midian, the people of Shu‘aib as رجفة *i.e.* earthquake (7 : 92; 29 : 38), صيحة *i.e.* blast (11 : 95), and عذاب يوم الظلة *i.e.* punishment of the day of overshadowing doom (26 : 190). Last of all the heavenly punishment which seized Pharaoh and his mighty hosts and his courtiers, Hāmān and Korah and destroyed them root and branch has been described by the expressions أغرقنا *i.e.* We drowned them (2 : 51; 7 : 137 & 17 : 104) and خسفنا به *i.e.* We made the earth swallow him up (28 : 82).

A careful study of these words shows that some of them, particularly رجفة, صاعقة, صيحة, حاصب and طاغية are interchangeable and possess almost analogous significance and meaning. See also 11 : 68.

42. The case of those who take helpers beside Allah is like unto the case of the spider, who makes for herself a house; and surely the frailest of *all* houses is the house of the spider, if they but knew!²⁹⁶⁷

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ
الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۖ إِذَا تَخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ
الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

43. Verily, Allah knows whatever they call upon beside Him; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.²⁹⁶⁸

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٣﴾

44. "And these are similitudes which We set forth for mankind, but only those understand them who have knowledge.

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا
الْعُلَمَاءُ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. ^bAllah created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the requirements of wisdom. In that surely is a Sign for the believers.²⁹⁶⁹

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a13 : 18 ; 14 : 26 ; ^b6 : 74 ; 16 : 4 ; 39 : 6.

2967. Commentary :

In the previous several verses arguments have been given in refutation of *Shirk* and brief references have been made to the lives and missions of some of the greatest preachers of Divine Unity to show that those who rejected them ultimately came to grief. This subject of the Unity of God is brought to a close in this verse with a beautiful metaphor which drives home the folly, futility and falsity of idolatrous beliefs and practices of polytheists. They are as frail, says the verse, as the web of a spider and cannot stand intelligent criticism.

2968. Commentary :

The words, *verily Allah knows* . . . , contain

a warning that God is not unaware of the blasphemous practices of idol-worshippers and that He will punish them for having enthroned false gods in their hearts.

2969. Commentary :

The expression *بالحق* (in accordance with the requirements of wisdom) signifies that there is clear evidence of an intelligent design and purpose in the creation of the heavens and the earth and that a profound and consummate plan exists in all the celestial and terrestrial bodies. This design and purpose constitutes an invincible testimony to the existence of an All-Knowing and All-Powerful Designer, Creator and Controller of the universe.

- 5 46. ^aRecite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book, and observe Prayer. Surely, Prayer restrains *one* from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest *virtue*. And Allah knows what you do.²⁹⁷⁰

أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ
الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالنُّكْرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ
أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a18 : 28.

2970. Important Words :

اتل (recite) is imperative from تَلَا. They say تَلَا الْكِتَابَ *i.e.* he read, rehearsed, recited the book; he followed it and did according to it. هُوَ يَتْلُو فَلَانًا means, he follows such a one in action; he imitates him. تَلَوْتُ الْإِبِلَ means, I drove the camels together from their several quarters. اتل means, proclaim ; preach, read, recite, rehearse; follow (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 114.

ذَكَرَ (remembrance) is infinitive noun from ذَكَرَ (dhakara) which means, he remembered; he kept in mind. ذَكَرَ (dhikrun) means, remembrance; speaking of or mentioning; honour; eminence; good name; praise, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 153, 201 ; 6 : 69 & 15 : 7.

Commentary :

Three things have been mentioned in this verse. *viz.*, preaching and reading of the Qur’ān, observance of Prayer and the remembrance of Allah. The purpose of all three is to deliver man from the bondage of sin and to help him to rise morally and spiritually which is the supreme object of all Divine Books. A living faith in a Supreme Being to Whom man has to render an account of all his actions after his death in a new life is the basic principle of all revealed religions and their great aim is to create and inculcate such faith because it is this faith that can serve as a potent and effective check

on man’s evil propensities and actions. This is why the Qur’ān reverts again and again to the subject of God’s existence and speaks of His great power, glory and love and lays the greatest emphasis on Divine remembrance of which the Islamic Prayer constitutes the most complete form; and of which—if performed with all its necessary conditions—purity of mind and actions is the inevitable result. Observance of Prayer, however, demands the fulfilment of the following five conditions :

1. One should be regular in saying Prayers.
2. Prayers should be said punctually at their appointed hours and in accordance with the prescribed rules.
3. One should be humble in spirit and should not allow one’s thoughts to wander away while saying Prayer.
4. Prayers should be said in congregation.
5. One should exhort others also to be regular and punctual in saying Prayers.

ذَكَرَ اللَّهِ may mean, (1) man’s glorification of God, or (2) God’s remembrance of man, *i.e.* His raising him to a place of honour and eminence and spreading his good reputation. The verse purports to say that if you remember God and glorify Him. He will bestow honour and renown upon you and will make you eminent and respected in the world. See also 23 : 10.

47. And argue not with the People of the Book except *“with what is best as an argument, but argue not at all with such of them as are unjust. And say, ‘We believe in that which has been revealed to us and that which has been revealed to you; and our God and your God is One; and to Him we submit.’* ²⁹⁷¹

48. And in like manner have We sent down the Book to thee; *“so those to whom We have given true knowledge of the Book believe in it (the Qur’ān); and of these People also there are some who believe in it. And none but the ungrateful deny Our Signs.* ²⁹⁷²

49. *“And thou didst not recite any Book before it, nor didst thou write one with thy right hand; in that case the liars would have doubted.* ²⁹⁷³

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَالْهَذَا وَالهَٰؤُلَاءِ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَكَذَٰلِكَ أُنزِلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لَآرْتَابَ الْبُاطِلُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

٣١٦ : ١٢٦; ٢٣ : ٩٧; ٤١ : ٣٥. ٣١١ : ١٨. ٣٤٢ : ٥٣.

2971. Commentary :

The verse lays down a very sound principle to guide us in religious controversy and when preaching our Faith to others. We should begin our preaching by laying stress on those beliefs and religious principles which are common between us and our adversary. As an instance we are told that while talking to “the People of the Book” we should start with the two basic religious principles of the Unity of God and Divine revelation. In the form in which Islam has presented these two principles, it stands unique among all religions. Whereas according to Islam God revealed Himself to man in every age, the followers of other religions claim to have the exclusive privilege of being “God’s sons and His loved ones” (5 : 19). Islam also teaches that

Prophets have been raised among all peoples (35 : 25), a principle which in its catholicity and broadmindedness finds no parallel in the teaching of any other religion.

2972. Commentary :

The expression “to whom We have given true knowledge of the Book,” may refer to (1) the “People of the Book” as shown in the text, or (2) to the Arabs in whose tongue the Qur’ān had been revealed, or (3) to Muslims who believe in the Qur’ān as the revealed Book of God.

The words “of these people” may refer either to the Meccans or to the People of the Book, preferably to the former.

2973. Commentary :

Alluding to the two great principles mentioned in v. 47 above, the present verse purports to say

50. Nay, it is a collection of clear Signs in the hearts of those who are given knowledge. And none but the wrongdoers deny Our Signs.²⁹⁷⁴

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. And they say, "Why are not Signs sent down to him from his Lord?"
¹Say, 'The Signs are with Allah, and certainly I am a clear Warner.'²⁹⁷⁵

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾

⁴⁶ : 38; ¹³ : 28. ¹²² : 50; ²⁶ : 116; ⁵¹ : 51; ⁶⁷ : 27.

that it is unimaginable that a man who could neither read nor write and therefore conceivably had no knowledge of the other revealed Scriptures should have been able to produce a Book which not only contains all that is of permanent value in these Scriptures but is also a compendium of all the universal teachings that are calculated to satisfy all the moral and spiritual needs and requirements of humanity for all time. The fact of the Holy Prophet being illiterate, and being born in a country, and having lived among a people, cut off from all contact with civilized humanity, indeed constitutes an infallible proof of the Qur'ān being a revealed Book. That the Holy Prophet could neither read nor write before he was commissioned as a Divine Messenger admits of no difference of opinion. Towards the end of his life he may have been able to decipher a few simple words but he never learned to read or write. See also 16:104.

2974. Commentary :

While the preceding verse referred to external evidence in support of the Qur'ān being the revealed Word of God, the present one furnishes an internal evidence, which is that from the

hearts of those who have been endowed with knowledge of the Qur'ān gush forth fountains of Divine light. The fact that the Qur'ān brought about a most wholesome transformation in the lives of a whole people who had sunk deep in the quagmire of moral turpitude and spiritual decadence and gave light to them who were helplessly groping in utter darkness, indeed constitutes a very strong internal evidence that it has proceeded from the Source of all light. The Divine light of which the Qur'ān is the repository irrefutably shows that it has been revealed by God and that it was beyond the power of man to produce it.

2975. Commentary :

In the Qur'ān by the Sign demanded by disbelievers is meant generally the Sign of punishment. This meaning is clear from vv. 54, 55 & 56 below. To this demand of disbelievers the Holy Prophet is commanded to say that it is not for him to fix the time when punishment should come, because he is only a Warner whose duty is confined to warning them that if they persisted in their rejection of the Divine Message and did not mend their ways they will perish.

52. Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to thee the Book which is recited to them? Verily, in this there is mercy and a reminder for a people who believe.²⁹⁷⁶

R. 6 53. Say, "Allah is sufficient as a Witness between me and you. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. And *as for* those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allah, they it is who are the losers."²⁹⁷⁷

54. ^bThey ask thee to hasten on the punishment; and had there not been an appointed term, the punishment would have come upon them. And it shall surely overtake them unexpectedly, while they perceive not.²⁹⁷⁸

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَىٰ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
سُوءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا
بِاللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْ لَا أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاءَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

^a4 : 167; 6 : 20; 13 : 44; 48 : 29. ^e22 : 48; 26 : 205; 27 : 72-73 : 37 : 177-178.

2976. Commentary :

To the demand of disbelievers for a Sign of punishment, the present verse gives an answer full of pathos. It asks disbelievers the pertinent question, viz., why do they demand a Sign of punishment when We have already given them a Sign of mercy in the form of the Qur'ān by acting upon which they can acquire eminence and become an honoured and respected people in the world? Do they not see that the Qur'ān has brought about a wonderful transformation in the lives of its followers? Does not this fact alone constitute a Sign for them? The verse further implies that God will treat the people of the Holy Prophet with mercy and that they will be led to the right path through the Qur'ān.

2977. Commentary :

This verse continues and develops the theme of the preceding verse. It purports to say that

the disbelievers demand a Sign to support and bear witness to the Holy Prophet's claim as a Divine Messenger while God Himself is Witness to his truth. Being All-Knowing and All-Aware, He knows best what Signs He should show to help and advance the cause of the Holy Prophet. The disbelievers, surely, shall have such Signs

2978. Commentary :

The verse gives a direct answer to the disbelievers' demand for the Sign of punishment and says that instead of benefiting by the Sign of mercy which has been given to them in the form of the Qur'ān, these ill-fated people persist in their demand for punishment. They will have this Sign and the punishment will come upon them also all of a sudden and from quarter least expected. But they will have to wait for ^{أجل مسمى} i.e. a fixed and appointed term.

55. They ask thee to hasten on the punishment ; but °Hell will certainly encompass the disbelievers ;^{2978A}

يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَخِاطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. °On the day when the punishment will overwhelm them from above them and from underneath their feet, and He will say, 'Taste ye the fruit of your actions.'²⁹⁷⁹

يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمْ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ

أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

49 : 49; 13 : 36; 17 : 9. 6 : 9

The implied reference in the words *أجل مسمى* is to the Hijrat of the Holy Prophet to Medina and the punishment demanded by the disbelievers is elsewhere expressed in the words, "O Allah! if this indeed be the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from heaven or bring down upon us a grievous punishment" (8 : 33). The punishment came upon the disbelievers in the form of the Battle of Badr which took place about a year after the Holy Prophet left Mecca. It broke the power of the Quraish and all their prominent leaders were killed. Their defeat was crushing and most unexpected. They could never conceive that their well armed and fully equipped army would be defeated by a handful of 313 ill-armed Muslims who had come to the field of battle quite unprepared, because they had no idea when they left Medina that they would be meeting a regular and fully armed host. The words, "it will come upon them unexpectedly" may also have a general application, meaning that when Divine punishment is delayed, the disbelievers begin to think that all the warning was but an illusion and a fantasy and consequently they

become lulled into a false sense of security and even increase in transgression. It is when they are in this state of complacency that the punishment comes upon them quite unexpectedly and destroys them.

2978 A. Commentary :

The punishment referred to in the previous verse is the punishment promised to the disbelievers in this life. The punishment mentioned in this verse is the punishment promised to them in the Hereafter.

2979. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that God is Compassionate and Merciful. He is very slow in sending down punishment. He delays and defers it. But when the iniquity and transgressions of evil-doers exceed all legitimate bounds and they throw all decency and propriety to the winds and set their face against God and His Prophets and His laws, then God's wrath is kindled and punishment overtakes them. It is sudden and swift and like a cataract overwhelms them from every direction.

57. O My servants who believe, verily, My earth is vast so worship Me alone.²⁹⁸⁰

يُعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ
فَاعْبُدُونِ ⑤

58. "Every soul shall taste of death; then to Us shall you be brought back."²⁹⁸¹

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ⑥

59. "And those who believe and do righteous deeds—they shall We surely house in lofty mansions of Paradise, beneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein. Excellent is the reward of those who work good,"²⁹⁸²

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِنَ
الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
نِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ⑦

60. "Those who are steadfast, and put their trust in their Lord.

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ⑧

^a3 : 186; 21 : 36. ^b25 : 76; 34 : 38. ^c16 : 43.

2980. Commentary :

As in the foregoing verses an implied reference was made to Hijrat, the believers in this verse are comforted that if life in their own native place has been made unbearable for them, the earth of God is vast and spacious and if they have to leave their hearths and homes for the sake of God, they will find "abundant place of refuge and plentifulness (4 : 101)."

2981. Commentary :

Here the subject of the preceding verse continues. The believers are told that they should be prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of God and should fear nothing, not even death, as death spares no one and knows no boundaries.

2982. Important Words :

غُرَفًا (lofty mansions) or غُرَفَات is the plural of غُرْفَة which is derived from غَرَفَ (gharafa). They say غَرَفَ الْمَاءَ i.e. he took the water with his hand. غُرْفَة means, a handful of water; an upper hand; a chamber or a chamber in the upper or uppermost storey of a house (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In this verse believers are promised in clear and unequivocal terms that those who leave their homes in the cause of God, and then remain steadfast in their belief and do good deeds, the reward they get far exceeds that which they lose for God's sake. This Divine promise was fulfilled to the very letter in the case of the Companions of the Holy Prophet.

61. "And how many an animal there is that carries not its own sustenance ! Allah provides for it and for you. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. ²⁹⁸³

62. ^bAnd if thou ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth and pressed into service the sun and the moon?' they will surely say, 'Allah.' How then are they being turned away from the truth? ²⁹⁸⁴

63. ^cAllah enlarges the means of sustenance for such of His servants as He pleases, and straitens them for whom He pleases. Surely, Allah has full knowledge of all things.

64. And if thou ask them, 'Who sends down water from the sky and therewith gives life to the earth after its death?' They will surely say, 'Allah'. Say, 'All praise belongs to Allah.' But most of them understand not.

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ دَابَّةٍ لَا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا ۗ اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا
وَإِذَا كُفِرَ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾

وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَنَحَرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ
لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

^a11 : 7. ^b7 : 55; 13 : 3; 16 : 3; 31 : 30; 35 : 14; 39 : 6. ^c13 : 27; 30 : 38; 34 : 37; 39 : 53; 42 : 13.

2983. Commentary :

In this verse the believers are further told that if they have to leave their hearths and homes, they should have no fear of poverty and starvation. When even animals and birds do not go without food, it is inconceivable that man who is God's noblest creation and its acme and apex should starve, particularly when he is prepared to suffer all this for the sake of his Creator.

2984. Commentary :

In the present and the next two verses the

point has been further stressed that God is the Creator and Source of all life, and for the continuity of this life He has pressed into the service of man all the forces of nature. This is a self-evident truth which not even the most confirmed disbeliever, consistently with reason, has the courage to deny. When such is the case, the verse purports to say, the believers who leave their hearths and homes and fly to a foreign land for the sake of God should not think that they would be left unprovided and uncared for.

- R. 7 65. ^aAnd this life of the world is nothing but a pastime and a sport, and the Home of the Hereafter—that indeed is Life, if they but knew!²⁹⁸⁵

66. ^bAnd when they go on board a ship, they call on Allah, with sincere and single-minded faith in Him. But when He brings them safe to land, behold, they associate partners with Him again.

67. ^cThat they may deny that which We have bestowed on them, and that they may enjoy themselves for a time. But they will soon come to know the consequences of their conduct.

68. ^dHave they not seen that We have made the sanctuary secure for them, while people are snatched away from all around them? Would they then believe in falsehood and deny the favour of Allah?²⁹⁸⁶

مَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ
لِلْآخِرَةِ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوةَ لَئِي لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

إِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
لَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ وَلَيَسْتَعْرَابُ فُسُوفِ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا آمِنًا وَيَتَخَفُّ النَّاسُ مِنْ
حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

^a6 : 33; 47 : 37; 57 : 21. ^b10 : 23; 31 : 33. ^c16 : 56; 30 : 35. ^d16 : 73.

2985. Important Words :

حيوان (life) is infinitive-noun from حي which means, he or it lived or was or became in the state termed حياة . They say حيت النار (hayyat) i.e. the fire was or became alive or burning. حيي الطريق (hayiya) means, the road was or became apparent or distinct. حياة means, life; faculty of growth, the faculty of sensation, and the faculty of intellect; freedom from grief or sorrow. حيوان is synonymous with حياة but with an intensive signification and means, everlasting life or life which will not be followed by death; much or full life; real life (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that life without hardships and privations borne for a noble cause, and

without sacrifices undergone for the sake of God, is “but an amusement and a sport,” a useless and purposeless existence. The purposeful life is that which is spent in the quest of a sublime object, in preparation for everlasting life for which God has created man.

2986. Commentary :

This verse constitutes a standing testimony to Ka‘ba being God’s own Sacred House. Ever since the advent of Islam when it was Divinely declared to be humanity’s everlasting *Qibla* and even in the days of Ignorance when the Arabs had no respect for human life, the territory called the *Haram*—the precincts of the Ka‘ba, remained a haven of safety. While there was no safety outside, complete security and peace reigned in it.

69. “And who is more unjust than he who invents a lie concerning Allah, or rejects the truth when it comes to him? ^bIs there not an abode in Hell for those who disbelieve?²⁹⁸⁷

70. And *as for* those who strive in Our path—We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily, Allah is with those who do good.²⁹⁸⁸

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ
بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَعَٰلَمُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

^a6 : 22; 10 : 18; 39 : 33.

^b18 : 103; 33 : 9 ; 48 : 14.

2987. Commentary :

This verse reverts to the central theme of the *Sūra*, viz., the truth of the claim of the Holy Prophet as a Divine Messenger, and sums up the argument to support and substantiate it. The argument is to the effect, (1) that a false claimant must eventually come to a sad end, and (2) that the rejectors and deniers of Divine Messengers never thrive and prosper.

2988. Commentary :

The verse gives the essence of Jihād as ordained by Islam. Islamic Jihād does not consist in killing and being killed but in

striving hard to win the pleasure of God. This can best be done by following a Divine Reformer when one has appeared and the safest and surest way to test the truth of his claim is to seek God’s guidance by praying to Him. Thus to serve the cause of truth with all one’s might under the command and guidance of a Divinely-appointed Reformer is Jihād in the truest sense of the word. There can be no greater Jihād than this. It may take the form of preaching and dissemination of the teaching of Islam by peaceful means or of defending it by the sword from being destroyed by its enemies.

CHAPTER 30

AL - R Ū M

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context

This *Sūra* was admittedly revealed at Mecca. It is, however, difficult to assign an exact date to its revelation, but the most reliable authorities place it in the sixth or seventh year of the Call, as that was the time when the tide of the Persian conquest to which the *Sūra* pointedly refers was at its height; the Persian armies were knocking at the very gates of Constantinople and the disgrace and degradation of the Romans had touched its nadir.

Towards the close of the preceding *Sūra* it was stated that the present life is but a pastime and a sport if it is not spent in a noble cause, and that life, real and everlasting, is the one in which a spiritual way-farer strives with might and main to win the pleasure of God. Further, the true believers were told that a sincere quest after God is bound to meet with success and a true lover of God is led to the Abode of Eternal Bliss where he sees the beautiful face of God and basks in the Sun of His love. The present *Sūra* opens with the prophetic words that the believers will successfully meet the ordeal of trials and tribulations through which they will be made to pass and as a reward of their sacrifice and suffering the gates of Divine grace and mercy will be opened to them.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The present *Sūra* is the second of the four Chapters—29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd—which have the abbreviated letters (مطعات) Alif Lām Mīm, placed in their beginning. This points to the great resemblance of their subject-matter. The dominant theme of these *Sūrās* is the defeat and discomfiture of the forces of disbelief and darkness and the rise and triumph of Islam. The prophecy is repeatedly made, with an emphasis and certainty which dispels all doubt, that the old order is dying and a new and better one is emerging from its ruins. This latter order, the *Sūra* says, will come into being through the noble and untiring efforts of a community of believers, who will carry the message of truth to the ends of the earth and who will be guided in their great endeavours for its dissemination and propagation by the teachings of the Qur'ān and the noble example of the Holy Prophet.

The *Sūra* opens with the declaration of a prophecy about the ultimate success of the Romans over the Persians. The prophecy was made at a time when the tide of the Persian conquest was sweeping away everything before its irresistible onrush and the degradation and humiliation of the Romans had sunk to its lowest depths. It was then beyond human knowledge and ingenuity to

predict that within a period ranging from three to nine years tables would be completely turned upon the Persians, and the vanquished would become the victors. The prophecy was literally fulfilled in most extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances (v. 5). Its fulfilment implied another and a greater prophecy that the forces of disbelief which were then too powerful for the poor and weak Muslims would also be put to complete rout, and Islam would march triumphantly from strength to strength. The disbelievers are further warned that the lesson is writ large on the face of history that rejectors of God's Prophets ultimately come to grief, and truth always triumphs and prospers, and, therefore, they should not allow themselves to be lulled into a false sense of complacency that things will always remain as they are. They are told that God has decreed that the face of the earth will change and a new order will be brought about through Islam.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to refer to the great powers of God manifested in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of day and night, the perfect design and order that exist in the universe, and to the birth of man from very insignificant beginnings. All these things lead to the irresistible and inevitable conclusion that God Who possesses such vast and unlimited powers does also have the power to make Islam grow from a small seed into a mighty tree under whose shade the whole of humanity will some day take rest, since it is the last Divine Message for mankind. It further says that Islam is bound to succeed because it is *دين الفطرة* i.e., it conforms to human nature and appeals to man's conscience, reason and commonsense. The triumph of Islam will come about through a great and wonderful revolution which will take place in Arabia. A people, morally and spiritually as good as dead will be roused from their deep sleep of ages, and drinking deep at the spiritual fountain caused by the Holy Prophet to flow will become the torch-bearers of spiritual light and will carry the Message of Islam to the ends of the earth and bring back erring humanity into the fold of its Creator.

Towards the close of the *Sūra* disbelievers are warned that their opposition cannot arrest or retard the progress of Islam. Truth in the long run always triumphs and prospers and falsehood is defeated and humiliated. This has happened in the time of every Prophet of God and this will happen again in the time of the Holy Prophet. The Prophet is then asked to bear with patience and fortitude all the persecution and mockery to which he is subjected, as success will soon come to him and those very people who now exult in harrying and harassing him will take pride in calling themselves his followers, and in serving his cause.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."²⁹⁸⁹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bAlif Lām Mīm.^{2989A}

أَلِفٌ لَامٌ مِيمٌ ②

3. The Romans have been defeated,

غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ③

4. In the land nearby, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious²⁹⁹⁰

فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ④

5. In a few years—'Allah's is the command before and after *that*—and on that day the believers will rejoice,²⁹⁹¹

فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ هَٰذَا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1. ^bSee 29 : 2. ^c3 : 155; 13 : 32.

2989. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

2989 A. Commentary :

The present *Sūra* is second of the four Chapters—29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd—which are headed by the abbreviated letters, Alif, Lām, Mīm. This has not been done haphazardly as some Christian writers are prone to think or deliberately misrepresent. These letters have a deep significance and far-reaching bearing on the subject-matter of the *Sūra*. There exists a striking resemblance between the subject-matter of all these four *Sūrās*; even their diction and style are very similar. They deal with the defeat and destruction of the forces of disbelief and darkness, and the rise and triumph of Islam. It has been repeatedly declared in these *Sūrās* that the old order is dying, and a new and better order is emerging from its ruins. In order to realize the full significance of this dominant theme, attention is drawn to history and to the laws of nature.

Moreover, each letter of the Arabic alphabet possesses a definite numerical value, and the combined letters *الم* have the numerical value 71 (ا having 1, ل 30, and م 40). As the central theme of the four Chapters is the progress and ultimate triumph of Islam, the placing of *الم* in their beginning seems to signify that Islam will take about as many years to consolidate itself fully and attain the hey-day of its glory. And thus it actually came to pass. Beginning with the Hijrat, Islam went from strength to strength till in the year 71 A.H., with the coming into power of Yazīd, son of Mu'āwiyah, the solidarity of Islam suffered the first serious check.

2990. Commentary :

By the words "the land nearby" are meant the countries lying close to Arabia—Palestine, Jordan and Syria.

2991. Important Words :

بضع (a few) is derived from بضع (baḍa'a). They say بضعه i.e. he cut it; he cut it into pieces: he cut it length-wise. بضع means, a part or

portion of the night; a time thereof. They say *مضى بضع من الليل* i.e. a part of the night passed. The word also denotes a variety of numbers such as five, seven, ten, etc., but is generally understood to mean from three to nine. *بضع رجال* means, from three to nine men. *بضع سنين* means, from three to nine years (Lane & Agrab).

Commentary :

In order fully to appreciate the significance of this and the preceding two verses it is necessary to cast a cursory glance over the political conditions that obtained in the two great Empires that lay on the borders of Arabia—the Persian and the Roman Empires—shortly before the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam. They were at war with each other. The first round had gone in favour of the Persians whose tide of conquest began in 602 A.D., when in order to avenge the death of Maurice, his patron and benefactor, at the hands of Phocas, Chosroes II started the war with Rome. For twenty years the Roman Empire was overrun by Persian armies as it had never been before. The Persian armies plundered Syria and Asia Minor and in 608 A.D. advanced to Chalcedon. Damascus was taken in 613. The surrounding country on which no Persian had ever set foot since the founding of the Empire was utterly and completely laid waste. In June 614 Jerusalem was also captured. The whole of Christendom was horrified by the news that together with the Patriarch the Persians had carried off the Cross of Christ. Christianity had been humbled in the dust. The flood of Persian conquest, however, did not stop with the capture of Jerusalem. Egypt was next conquered, Asia Minor again overrun, and the Persian armies were knocking at the very gates of Constantinople. The Romans could offer

but little resistance as they were torn by internal dissensions. The humiliation of Heraclius was so complete that “Chosroes wanted to see him brought in chains to the foot of his throne and was not prepared to give him peace till he had abjured his crucified god and embraced the worship of the sun” (Historians’ History of the World, vol. 7, p. 159., vol. 8, pp. 94-95 & Enc. Brit. under “Chosroes” II & “Heraclius”). This state of affairs very much grieved the Muslims as they had much in common with the Romans who were the “People of the Book.” But the Quraish of Mecca who, like the Persians, were idolaters, feigned to see in this discomfiture of Christian armies a happy augury for the overthrow and destruction of Islam. It was shortly after this complete debacle of Roman forces that in 616 A.D., came the revelation to the Holy Prophet which forms the subject-matter of the verse under comment and the two preceding verses. The verses possessed a twofold significance. They foretold, in circumstances then quite inconceivable, that the whole position would be completely reversed within the short space of eight or nine years and the erstwhile victorious Persian armies would suffer a crushing defeat at the hands of the utterly defeated, prostrated and humbled Romans. The Arabic word used in the verse to denote this period is *بضع* (*biḍʿun*) which as shown under “Important Words,” signifies a period from three to nine years. The significance of the prophecy embodied in the verses, however, lay in the fact that, within this short period, the foundations of the ultimate triumph of Islam and that of the defeat and discomfiture of the forces of disbelief and darkness would be firmly laid. The prophecy was fulfilled in circumstances beyond human calculation or comprehension. About the extreme improbability of fulfilment of the prophecy in the circum-

stances then obtaining, the following observation of Gibbon may be read with interest:

In the midst of the Persian triumphs he (the Holy Prophet) ventured to foretell that before many years should elapse victory would return to the banners of the Romans...At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the Empire (Rise, Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 5, p. 74).

After licking his wounds for several years, Heraclius was at last able to take the field against the Persians in 622, the year of the Holy Prophet's Hijrat to Medina. In 624 he advanced into northern Media, where he destroyed the great fire-temple of Gandzak (Gazaca) and thus avenged the destruction of Jerusalem. This happened exactly within nine years, the period foretold in the verse, and to add to its importance and significance it happened in the year when the power of the Quraish also suffered a very serious reverse in the Battle of Badr, which recalled a Biblical prophecy foretelling the fading of the glory of Kedar (Isa. 21:17). In 627 Heraclius defeated the Persian army at Nineveh and advanced towards Ctesiphon. Chosroes fled from his favourite residence Dastgerd (near Baghdad), and after dragging on an inglorious existence was murdered by his own son, Siroes, on 19th February, 628, A.D.; and thus the Persian Empire, from the apparent greatness which it had reached a few years earlier sank into hopeless anarchy (Enc. Brit.).

The fulfilment of the prophecy was so remarkable and unforeseen that prejudiced Christian writers have been hard put to it to explain it

away. Rodwell says that the vowel points of the Arabic expression سَيَغْلِبُونَ were left undecided so that it would read either way, i.e., *sa-yaghlibūn* meaning, "they will be victorious" or as *sa-yughlabūn* meaning, "they will be defeated." He even adds that the ambiguity was intentional. The Rev. gentleman pretends not to understand this simple fact that the vowels of an expression which had been recited hundreds of times in daily Prayers and otherwise could hardly be left undecided. Mr. Wherry goes a step further. He says: "Our daily newspapers constantly forecast political events of this kind." The less said about this futile attempt to explain away and belittle the importance of this mighty prophecy, the better. If in the circumstances when Christianity lay humbled in the dust and Persian armies were knocking at the very gates of Constantinople and Heraclius had in vain sued for peace, a person situated as the Holy Prophet was, could forecast that within the short space of only eight or nine years the victors would become vanquished and the forces of Chosroes would receive a crushing defeat at the hands of the same Heraclius who only a few years back had very humbly but unsuccessfully sued for peace and the proud and mighty Persians would lie prostrate and exhausted, the forecast must indeed be considered to have proceeded from a superhuman source. What added to the remarkable character of the prophecy was the fact that the news of the victory of the Romans over the Persians reached the Muslims exactly at the time when they were themselves rejoicing over their own victory in the Battle of Badr.

The words, "Allah's is the command before and after that," mean that it is God's eternal and unalterable decree that disbelief is always defeated and humbled, and truth triumphs and progresses.

6. With the help of Allah. He helps whom He pleases; and He is the Mighty, the Merciful.²⁹⁹²

7. Allah *has made this* promise. "Allah breaks not His promise, but most men know not."²⁹⁹³

8. They know *only* the outer *aspect* of the life of this world, and of the Hereafter they are utterly unmindful.²⁹⁹⁴

9. "Do they not reflect in their own minds? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two but in accordance with the requirements of wisdom and for a fixed term. "But many among men believe not in the meeting with their Lord."²⁹⁹⁵

يَنْصُرِ اللَّهُ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ⑥

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَا يَخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ⑦

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَفْلُونَ ⑧

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَدَّدٍ ⑨ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكُفْرُونَ ⑩

③ : 195 ; 39 : 21. ⑦ : 186.

⑩ : 46 ; 29 : 24 ; 32 : 11.

2992. Commentary :

The allusion in the words, "with the help of Allah," is to the help and succour which God vouchsafed to Muslims on the battlefield of Badr (3 : 124-126). On that day it was established beyond doubt that "Allah is the Mighty, the Merciful." The disbelievers, to their bitter dismay and mortification experienced the force of God's might and the Muslims that of His mercy.

2993. Commentary :

The reference in the words, "Allah has made this promise," is to the Divine decree alluded to in the words "that Allah might accomplish the thing that was decreed" (8 : 43) used with reference to the Battle of Badr.

2994. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the knowledge of disbelievers is confined to the material side of

this world and they are ignorant of things spiritual. The implication is that if disbelievers cannot understand how a people (the Romans) who had been completely broken and had lain exhausted and prostrate a few years back won a smashing victory over their powerful foe (the Persians) and how a handful of Muslims with no experience of war and having no arms and ammunition, succeeded in defeating a powerful army of the Quraish, three times their number, it is because the disbelievers' knowledge is limited to an understanding of the physical causes of the incidents, but the causes of the defeat of the Persians and that of the Quraish lay deeper and were more spiritual than material or mundane.

2995. Commentary :

The verse means to say that if disbelievers had reflected over the great powers and faculties

10. "Have they not travelled in the earth so that they might see how *evil* was the end of those who were before them? They were stronger than these in power, and they tilled the soil and populated it more *and better* than these have populated it. And their Messengers came to them with manifest Signs. ²⁹⁹⁶ And Allah would not wrong them, but they wronged their own souls.²⁹⁹⁶

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا
الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ^{١٠}

11. Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the Signs of Allah, and mocked at them.²⁹⁹⁷

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ إِسَاءُوا السُّوْأَىٰ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ^{١١}

¹² : 110; 22 : 47; 35 : 45; 47 : 11. ¹⁴ : 41; 99 : 70; 10 : 45; 18 : 50; 29 : 32.

with which man has been endowed and had reflected also over the very limited duration of their worldly existence they would have realized that man's life on this earth is not the be-all and end-all of his creation and that there is a fuller and better life beyond the grave where man's spiritual progress will know no end and that the present life is only a preparation for the life hereafter. See also v. 12 below.

2996. Important Words :

أَثَارُوا (tilled) is derived from ثَار which means, it was or became raised or stirred up; it spread; it rose. ثَارَ الْمَاءُ means, the water flowed forth with force; it gushed forth. أَثَارَهُ means, he raised or roused him or it. أَثَارَ الْأَرْضَ means, he tilled the ground or land; he cultivated it by ploughing and sowing. أَثَارَ الْفِتْنَةَ بَيْنَهُمْ means, he excited mischief amongst them (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse indicates that there had lived in the past people who had attained to a very high

stage of civilization and culture; particularly they had made great progress in the art of architecture, mining and cultivation. Recent researches in archaeology have borne testimony to this fact. The Qur'ān had referred to this fact fourteen hundred years ago.

2997. Commentary :

As stated above the truth and triumph of Islam form the basic and central theme of the present *Sūra*. In v. 8 above we are told that the endeavours of disbelievers are confined to the acquisition of things of the material world. and that they give no thought to the fact that there is a better and higher spiritual life after this life and that the real purpose and aim of all religions, as of Islam, is the realization of this supreme fact. The present and the preceding two verses deal with the truth of Islam and adduce three arguments in its support: (a) The creation of man and the subjection of all created things to his service; (b) the great wisdom and beautiful design and order that pervade the

- 2 12. "Allah originates creation; then He keeps repeating it; then to Him shall you be brought back."²⁹⁹⁸

13. And on the day when the Hour will arrive ^b the guilty will be seized with despair.²⁹⁹⁹

14. And they shall have no intercessors from *among them* whom they associate *with God*; and ^cthey will deny *those* whom they associate *with Him*.

15. And on the day when the Hour will arrive—on that day they will become separated *from one another*.

16. Then as to those ^dwho believed and did good works, they will be honoured and made happy in a *stately garden*.³⁰⁰⁰

اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْجَحِيمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ شُفَعَاءُ وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

^aSee 29 : 20. ^b6 : 45, ^c10 : 29. ^d4 : 176; 13 : 30; 14 : 24; 22 : 57; 42 : 23; 68 : 35.

entire universe; and (c) the life-history of the past Prophets and the sad end of their rejectors. The verse under comment purports to say that all these arguments lead to but one conclusion, *viz.*, that those unfortunate people who rejected God's Message and persecuted His Messengers and persisted in transgression, vice and sin, came to grief, and such will also be the end of the opponents of Islam. They, too, will meet with failure and frustration and Islam's cause will triumph.

2998. Commentary :

The present verse further develops the theme of its predecessor that through Islam God is bringing into being a new creation and a new order. See also 29 : 20.

2999. Important Words :

For يَبْلِسُ (seized with despair) see 2 : 35.

Commentary

Taking the word السَّاعَةُ (Hour) as referring to

the day of the Battle of Badr, the word يَبْلِسُ portrays the mental anguish of the Quraish on that day. It says that they were simply dumb-founded. They had not the faintest idea of the crushing defeat they suffered at the hands of the poor, almost unarmed, and ill-provisioned, handful of Muslims, whom they had expelled from their hearths and homes hardly a year ago. Their idols and associate-gods, as is mentioned in the next verse, did not and could not come to their help.

3000. Important Words :

يُحْبَرُونَ (they will be honoured and made happy) is formed from حَبَّرَ. They say حَبَّرَ الشَّيْءَ *i.e.* he made the thing beautiful or adorned it or embellished it and made it plain أَحَبَّرَ الْأَرْضَ means, the herbage of the earth grew large. حَبَّرَهُ means, he or it made him happy, joyful or glad ; it affected him with happiness that made his face shine; he treated him with honour or with extraordinary honour (Lane & Aqrab).

17. But as for those "who disbelieved and rejected Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, these will be brought forth in punishment.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. "So glorify Allah when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning—

فَسُبِّحْنَ اللَّهَ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. And to Him belongs all praise in the heavens and the earth—and glorify Him in the afternoon and when you enter upon the time of the decline of the sun.³⁰⁰¹

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. "He brings forth the living from the dead, and He brings forth the dead from the living; and He gives life to the earth after its death. And in like manner shall you be brought forth.^{3001A}

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَٰلِكَ تَخْرُجُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

^a2 : 40; 7 : 37; 57 : 20; 64 : 11; 78 : 22-29. ^b17 : 79 ; 20 : 131 ; 50 : 40. ^c6 : 96 ; 10 : 32.

Commentary :

How through Islam the Arabs rose from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacles of spiritual and material glory and eminence is writ large on the face of history.

3001. Commentary :

After one reflects over the sublime purpose of man's creation and on how a people sunk deep in moral bankruptcy rose to the heights of spiritual glory, as did the Arabs by following the Holy Prophet, one is bound involuntarily to exclaim "glory be to Allah, the Great Creator of heavens and earth and all

that is between them."

3001A. Commentary :

The present verse sums up the subject-matter of the foregoing verses and points to the conclusion that a people who intellectually, morally and spiritually were as good as dead, by acting upon the teaching of the Qur'ān not only became the teachers of mankind in physical sciences but became also its moral and spiritual preceptors. This phenomenon of the coming to life of a dead people is witnessed in the time of every Prophet and Divine Reformer and serves as a great proof in support of life after death.

- 3 21. And *one* of His Signs is that He created you from dust; then, behold, you are men spreading over the earth.³⁰⁰²

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ
بَشَرٌ تَنْشُرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

3002. Important Words :

بشر (men) is derived from بشر (bashara). They say بشر الجراد الارض i.e. the locusts ate altogether what was upon the surface of the earth so as to lay bare its surface. بشره (bashshara-hī) means, he announced to him a news which produced a change in his complexion or revealed his emotions. Man is called بشر because he is possessed of strong emotions and because of all living things his body is most exposed to outer influences (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The raising of the dead to life in the next life or of a morally and spiritually dead people to a new life in this world, as is stated above, forms the central theme of the *Sūra* under comment. Some aspects of this very important subject have been dealt with in the foregoing verses. The present and the next six verses deal with some more aspects. They refer to some unmistakable Signs which prove and establish God's existence and point to His great power and control over life and death. These Signs fall under two categories : (a) Signs that appear from God and lead men to God and (b) all those natural phenomena which establish man's faith in God or which prove God's existence and Almightiness.

In the present verse we have, "He created you from dust" (تراب), while elsewhere man is stated to have been created from طين i.e., clay (6 : 3; 17 : 62; 23 : 13; 32 : 8; 37 : 12; 38 : 72). In fact man's creation from dust or dry earth in this verse refers to a stage of man's creation which preceded his formation from clay, or it refers to man's food which is derived from earth and from which human body derives its sustenance. Three arguments have been given in this verse to prove God's existence: (a) God has created man from dust which apparently has no relation to life and does not possess the attribute to produce it: (b) He has not only created man but has endowed him with very subtle emotions and has implanted in his nature a yearning and craving to advance and make progress and has bestowed upon him the aptitudes and capabilities to achieve the object of his desire; and (c) He has placed in man the desire to spread about and dominate the world and has given him the necessary powers and attributes for the achievement of this great object. All these facts lead to the irresistible conclusion that there is an Almighty Creator and that He has created man for the achievement of a sublime purpose. Man would not have been endowed with such marvellous capabilities and powers if his life had been confined to the limited and uncertain existence on this planet.

22. And *one* of His Signs is that ^aHe has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.³⁰⁰³

23. ^bAnd of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge.³⁰⁰⁴

24. ^cAnd among His Signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. In that surely are Signs for a people who hear.³⁰⁰⁵

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ
الْسِّنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَالِدِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ
مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

٢٤ : 2 ; 7 : 190 ; 16 : 73 : 39 : 7. ٢٢ : 42 : 30. ٢١٠ : 68 ; 27 : 87 ; 28 : 74.

3003. Commentary :

The verse gives another argument to prove the existence of God and of life beyond the grave, viz., that God has created a pair—man and woman—and has engendered love between them. This leads to procreation and continuity of human life on earth. This continuity of life shows a design and a purpose behind it and thus it proves the existence of a Designer and a better and fuller life after the life on this earth.

3004. Commentary :

Human progress and advancement is closely connected with the diversity of tongues and colours. This diversity again points to a design

and a Designer. That Designer is the Creator of heavens and earth.

Underneath the diversity of tongues and colours which has resulted in diversity of civilizations and cultures there lies a unity—the unity of mankind. This oneness of humanity leads to the inevitable conclusion of the Oneness of its Creator.

3005. Commentary :

The alternation of day and night provides one more evidence of the wisdom and intelligence underlying the creation of the universe. Normally man works by day, and needs rest at night to replenish his tired and jaded faculties.

25. And *one* of His Signs is that ^aHe shows you the lightning as a *source* of fear and hope, ^band He sends down water from the sky, and quickens therewith the earth after its death. In that surely are Signs for a people who understand.³⁰⁰⁶

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْزِلُ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُخْرِجُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. ^cAnd among His Signs is that the heaven and earth stand *firm* by His command. Then when He calls you *by* a call *coming* from the earth, behold, you will come forth.³⁰⁰⁷

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ
إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ
تَخْرُجُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. ^dAnd to Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him.³⁰⁰⁸

وَلَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

^a13 : 13; ^b40 : 14 ; 42 : 29.

^c22 : 66 ; 35 : 42.

^d16 : 53 ; 20 : 7 ; 21 : 20 ; 22 : 65.

3006. Commentary :

A part from the fact that lightning heralds rain which brings fertility and prosperity in its wake, it kills germs of many different diseases and eliminates worms that destroy crops. So, lightning not only causes fear but is also a source of manifold benefits to man. Every element of nature plays its allotted part in the Divine scheme of things, thus bearing testimony to God's existence, His great wisdom and power.

3007. Commentary :

At another place in the Qur'ān we have: "Who raised up the heavens without any pillars that you can see" (13 : 3). Long ages have passed since this solar system came into being, yet nothing has gone wrong with it. Such is God's handiwork that stars keep their orbits without any visible support. The law of gravitation

which is supposed to keep them in their respective positions was discovered long afterwards. This fact too points to God's great powers and control over the universe. See also 13 : 3.

3008. Commentary :

It is beyond human ken or comprehension to guess when this great universe came into being. From an unknown and untraced past the sun with all the planets and heavenly bodies has travelled on its appointed course with a regularity and uniformity that have known no flaw or fault. There are millions of these satellites and yet they never come into collision, so perfect and consummate is the law and order that governs the universe. This seems to be the meaning of the words, "All are obedient to "Him."

28. "And He it is Who originates the creation, then keeps repeating it, and it is most easy for Him. His is the most exalted state in the heavens and the earth; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.³⁰⁰⁹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَلَهُ الشَّكْلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾

- 4 29. He sets forth for you a parable concerning yourselves. Have you, among those whom your right hands possess, partners in what We have provided for you so that you become equal *sharers* therein, and fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We explain the Signs to a people who understand.³⁰¹⁰

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِي مَا رَزَقْتُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ
فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ
نُقَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

30. Nay, but those who are unjust follow their own low desires without knowledge. Then ^bwho can guide him whom Allah has adjudged as lost? There will be no helpers for them.

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ فَمَنْ
يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a10 : 35 ; 27 : 65 ; 29 : 20.

^b7 : 187 ; 13 : 34 ; 39 : 37 ; 40 : 34.

3009. Commentary :

In the preceding few verses reference has been made to five heavenly Signs: (a) Man's own origin; (b) relation between man and his wife which leads to the procreation and expansion of mankind and marks the beginning of human social life; (c) creation of heavens and earth and the diversity of men's colours and tongues which has given rise to different civilizations and cultures; (d) phenomenon of the alternation of day and night; and (e) the coming down of rain from heaven which gives new life to a dead land. All these Signs have been mentioned to show that God has full power to give new life to a dead people and that He can raise a people as good as dead morally and spiritually to the heights of

glory and grandeur. This seemingly impossible change constitutes proof positive of the fact that in the next world, too, God will raise the dead to a new life. This seems to be the purport of the verse under comment.

3010. Commentary :

This verse contains a very effective argument against polytheism. It purports to say that when a master and slave are not equal though they are both human beings, and when the master would not share his wealth and property with his slave, how then could God, the sole Creator and Controller of all things, be equal to idols of wood and stone and how could He be regarded as sharing the control of the universe with anybody. See also 21 : 23.

31. "So set thy face to *the service of religion* as one devoted to God. And follow the nature made by Allah—the nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah. ^bThat is the right religion. But most men know not.³⁰¹¹

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ
النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Set your face to God, turning to Him in repentance, and fear Him, and observe Prayer, and be not of those who associate partners with God—³⁰¹²

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. 'Of those who split up their religion and have become divided into sects; every party rejoicing in what they have.³⁰¹³

مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَفَّوْا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ
بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a10 : 106 ; 30 : 44 :

^b12 : 41 ; 98 : 6.

^c6 : 160.

3011. Commentary :

This verse continues the theme of v. 29 above, the theme, briefly, of the Almightyness and Unity of God, and, by implication, of the oneness of all humanity. The fact, that God is One and all humanity, too, is one, has been called فطرة الله (nature given by God) or دين الفطرة i.e. the religion which is rooted in the pure and unsullied nature of man. This in other words is Islam and to it has the Holy Prophet referred in his well-known saying : كل مولود يولد على فطرة الاسلام i.e. every child is born with an unsullied and pure nature, which is دين الفطرة i.e. the religion to which pure human nature conforms and instinctively reacts. It is in this religion that a child is born, but it is his environments, the ideas and beliefs of his parents and the training he receives from them that subsequently make him a Jew, a Magian or a Christian (Bukhārī).

The words, "There is no altering the creation of Allah," mean that true religion is rooted in the very nature of man. False beliefs are the result of the influences of environment. Once those vicious extraneous influences are removed, he at once reacts to it and hastens to accept it.

3012. Commentary :

The verse means to say that mere belief in the Almightyness and Oneness of God, though it forms the basic principle of true religion, is not enough. A true religion has certain ordinances and commandments also. Of these commandments the top priority goes to Prayer, which must be duly observed. A true religion also teaches that fear lest one should incur the displeasure of God, must govern all our actions.

3013. Important Words :

حزب (hizb) means, a party or company of men, assembling themselves on account of an event

34. "And when an affliction befalls men, they cry unto their Lord, turning to Him *in repentance* ; then, when He has made them taste of mercy from Him lo! a section of them associate partners with their Lord,³⁰¹⁴

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ
ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَرْبِّمُ
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. ^bSo as to be ungrateful for what We have given them. So enjoy yourselves *awhile* but soon you will come to know.

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَيَمَتُّوهُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Have We sent down to them any authority which speaks *in favour* of what they associate with Him?³⁰¹⁵

أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. "And when We make men taste of mercy, they rejoice therein; but if an evil befall them because of that which their own hands have sent on, behold! they are in despair.³⁰¹⁶

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

^a10 : 13 ; 39 : 9,50. ^b16 : 56 ; 29 : 67. ^c10 : 22 ; 41 : 51-52 ; 42 : 49.

that has befallen them; an assembly, a collective body or company of men; a party, portion, division or class of men; the troops, prepared for fighting; any party agreeing in hearts and actions whether meeting together or not (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that deviation from true religion led people in the past to be split up into warring sections and aroused differences among them.

3014. Commentary :

Having referred in the previous few verses to the Unity of God as being the basic principle of all religions, this and the next three verses

deal with *Shirk*, i.e. associating false gods with the One True God.

3015. Commentary :

This verse emphatically declares that polytheists have no argument whatsoever to support and substantiate their polytheistic beliefs. Human nature, reason and commonsense all revolt against idolatry and ploytheism.

3016. Important Words :

قنط (are in despair) is formed from قنط which means, he despaired. قانط which is active participle from this root means, one who despairs of God's mercy. The Arabs say قنط ماءه عنا i.e. he withheld or debarred his water from us. قنوط (infinitive noun) means, complete despair (Lane & Aqrab).

38. Have they not seen that "Allah enlarges the provision to whomsoever He pleases, and straitens it to whomsoever He pleases. In that truly are Signs for a people who believe.

39. ^bSo give to the kinsman his due, and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.³⁰¹⁷

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَ
يَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

فَاتِّبِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْيَسِيرَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْبَٰفِلُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

^aSee 29 : 63.

^b16 : 91 ; 17 : 27.

3017. Commentary :

After dealing with the all-important subject of the Unity of God and giving strong arguments in refutation of *Shirk* (polytheism) in the preceding several verses, the *Sūra*, in the verse under comment, proceeds to draw attention to the fact that mere beliefs, principles and ideals, however noble and laudable, do not make a religion complete. It must further possess some practical ordinances among which pride of place is given here to the economic uplift of the less fortunate members of society. The words, "give to the kinsman his due," embody a fine principle, viz., that the monetary help which the wealthy people give to their poorer brethren in the form of *Zakāt*, charity or gift are the latter's right and due, because in the form of their work and labour

they make a substantial contribution to the production of wealth of the rich people. It is also of some interest to note that, besides the verse under comment, wherever the Qur'ān commands the believers to give monetary help to the needy and the poor, it invariably uses the word *آت* instead of *اعط*. By so doing it seeks to safeguard the self-respect of the poor person who receives charity, because, whereas the latter word expresses the sense of giving, the former expresses that of presenting (*Kashshāf*). Elsewhere in the Qur'ān we are told that in the wealth of the rich there is a share for those who ask for help as well as for those who cannot (51 : 20). In this way Islam safeguards the self-respect and dignity of a poor person even when he is actually receiving monetary help from a rich brother.

40. "Whatever you pay as interest that it may increase the wealth of the people, it does not increase in the sight of Allah; but whatever you give in Zakāt seeking the favour of Allah—it is these who will increase *their wealth* manifold.³⁰¹⁸

وَمَا أَتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رَبًّا لِيَرْبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وََمَا أَتَيْتُمْ مِنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

41. It is Allah Who has created you, and then He has provided for you; then ^bHe will cause you to die, and then He will bring you to life. Is there any of your *so-called* partners who can do any of these things? Glorified be He and exalted above that which they associate *with Him*.³⁰¹⁹

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِثْلَ شَيْءٍ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

^a2 : 276 ; 3 : 131.

^b2 : 29 ; 22 : 67 ; 40 : 69 ; 45 : 27.

3018. Commentary :

In this verse a contrast has been made between *Zakāt* and interest which institution, according to some people, can help the poor to improve their economic condition. By *Zakāt* Islam seeks to improve the miserable lot of the poor, at the same time safeguarding their dignity and self-respect, while the institution of interest not only does not better the economic condition of the poor but on the contrary tends actually to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The vast disparity of wealth between different sections of human society, as a result of which a large majority grovels in grinding indigence and penury and a tiny section rolls in unmeasured

wealth, is inevitably due to the institution of interest. It is on co-operative basis as taught by Islam and not by the giving and taking of interest that the wealth of a community can increase, and it is to this important economic truth that the verse under comment refers.

3019. Commentary :

Before closing the subject of the Unity of God dealt with in the previous several verses, the *Sūra* summarizes the arguments which support it. They are: (a) God is our Creator; (b) He is our Sustainer and Provider; and (c) He possesses complete control over life and death. These are the three very essential attributes that the Supreme Being Who commands and demands our worship must and does possess.

- 5 42. Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste *the fruit* of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil.³⁰²⁰

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي
النَّاسِ لِيَذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

3020. Commentary :

The main theme of the foregoing verses consisted in engendering and instilling in man belief in an Almighty and All-Powerful God, Who creates, regulates and guides all life. In the present verse we are told that when darkness enshrouds the face of the earth and man consigns God to oblivion and gives himself up to the worship of the false gods of his own conception and creation, God raises a Prophet to bring back "the erring flock into the Master's fold." Such was the condition of mankind when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, humanity's greatest Teacher, made his appearance. The following quotations support this contention :

The beginning of the seventh century was an epoch of disintegration—national and social—and religion had become extinct as a moral force and had become reduced to mere ritual and ceremony and the great Faiths of the world had ceased to exert any healthy influence on the lives of their followers. The holy flames kindled by Zoroaster, Moses and Jesus had been quenched in the blood of man.....Incessant war for supremacy, perpetual internecine strife, combined with the ceaseless wrangling of creeds and sects, had sucked the life-blood out of the hearts of nations, and people of the earth, trodden under the iron heels of a lifeless sacerdotalism, were crying to God to deliver them from the misdeeds of their masters. Never in the history of the world was the need

so great, the time so ripe for the appearance of a Deliverer ("Spirit of Islam").

In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. It seemed that the great civilization that it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next and law and order were unknown....It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over-arched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering, its trunk no longer alive with the flowing sap of devotion and reverence, but rotten to the core ("Emotion as the Basis of Civilization").

The words "land and sea," may signify: (a) such nations as had no experience of Divine revelation and those that believed in Heavenly Scriptures ; or (b) nations whose cultures and civilizations were based purely on reason and collective human experience and those whose cultures and civilizations were based on Divine revelation ; (c) peoples living on the continents and those living in the islands.

The verse means to say that the nations of the world had become corrupt to the very core—politically, socially and morally, and their

43. Say, "Travel in the earth and see how *evil* was the end of those before you. Most of them were idolaters".³⁰²¹

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

44. 'So set thy face to *the service* of the right religion, before there comes the day from Allah for which there will be no averting. On that day *mankind* will split up *into parts*.³⁰²²

فَاقْمْ وُجُوهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ
يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُصَدِّعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

45. Those who disbelieve will bear *the consequences* of their disbelief ; and those who do righteous deeds will earn *good* for themselves,³⁰²³

مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسٍ
يَمْهُدُ وَن ﴿٣٣﴾

46. 'That He, out of His bounty, may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds. Surely, He loves not the disbelievers.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a16 : 37; 27 : 70 ; 40 : 83.

^b10 : 106 ; 30 : 31.

^c10 : 5; 34 : 5-6.

corruption was the result of "what their hands had wrought."

(*sada'a*). صدعه means, he clove, split or slit it. تصدع القوم means, the people became separated or dispersed. يصدعون means, they will become separated or split up (Lane & Aqrab).

3021. Commentary :

The verse warns disbelievers that their rejection of the Holy Prophet would lead them to ruin. The fact that the rejection and persecution of Divine Messengers has always resulted in the destruction of the rejectors is writ large on the pages of history.

3022. Important Words :

يصدعون (will split up) is derived from صدع

3023. Important Words :

يمهدون (will earn good) is derived from مهد which means, he spread out; he attended to a business and drew profit from it. مهد الامر means, he reformed the affair and made it easy and put it in proper order. مهد لفلان عذره means, he accepted the excuse of such a one. مهد لنفسه means, he provided good for himself and sent it ahead (Aqrab). See also 3 : 47.

47. And among His Signs is that He sends the winds as bearers of glad tidings and that He may make you taste of His mercy, and that "the ships may sail at His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.³⁰²⁴

48. And surely, We sent Messengers before thee to their own people, and they brought them clear Signs. Then We punished those who were guilty. ^bAnd it was certainly incumbent upon Us to help the believers.

49. ^c*It is Allah Who sends the winds so that they raise a cloud. Then He spreads it in the sky as He pleases, and places layer upon layer and thou seest the rain issuing forth from its midst. And when He causes it to fall on whom He pleases of His servants, behold ! they rejoice;*³⁰²⁵

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ
مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا وَكَانَ حَقًّا
عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ
فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدَقَ
يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

^a17 : 67 ; 31 : 32 ; 45 : 13. ^b10 : 104 ; 40 : 52 ; 58 : 22. ^c24 : 44.

3024. Commentary :

The words, "He sends the winds with glad tidings," point to a Divine law which works with as much effect in the physical universe as it does in the spiritual world. Just as winds precede rain, heralding its advent, similarly before the advent of a Divine Reformer there come into existence conditions which are favourable to the spread of his teachings and there appear good and righteous men who prepare the ground and "make the paths

straight for him." This has happened in the time of every Prophet.

3025. Important Words :

كسفا (pieces) is derived from كسف (kasafa). They say كسف الثوب i.e. he cut up the cloth. كسفة means, his hope was blasted. كسفة means, piece, fragment, part (Aqrab).

ودق (rain) is infinitive-noun from ودق (wadaqa). They say ودق السماء i.e. the cloud rained. ودق السيف means, the sword became sharp (Aqrab).

50. Though before that—before it was sent down upon them—they were in despair.

وَأِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
لَبُئْسِينَ ⑤

51. ^aLook, therefore, at the marks of Allah's mercy: how He quickens the earth after its death. Verily, the same *God* will quicken the dead: for He has power over all things.³⁰²⁶

فَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى أَثَرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ أَمْرِ الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ⑥

52. And if We sent a wind and ^bthey saw it (their harvest) turn yellow, they would certainly, thereafter, *begin to deny Our favours*.

وَلَكِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا الظُّلُمَاتِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
يَكْفُرُونَ ⑦

53. And thou canst not make the dead to hear ^cnor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call, when they turn away showing their backs.

فَأَنْتَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا
وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ⑧

54. ^dNor canst thou guide the blind out of their error. Thou canst make only those to hear who would believe in Our Signs and they submit.³⁰²⁷

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعُمْيَ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ إِنْ تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا
مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ⑨

^a16 : 66 : 22 : 6 : 35 : 28, 39 : 22 : 45 : 6. ^b56 : 66 : 57 : 21. ^c10 : 43 : 21 : 46 : 27 : 81.

^d10 : 44 : 27 : 82.

3026. Commentary :

After attention has been drawn in the preceding two verses to the natural phenomenon that when, after severe drought, welcome rain comes, the parched and dry earth gets a new life, in the present verse we are told that similar formula operates in the spiritual renaissance of a morally decrepit people. A people virtually as good as dead receive a new life through a Divine Prophet.

3027. Commentary :

The verse points to another natural law, viz., that it is man himself who makes or mars his destiny. No Prophet or Divine revelation can lead a man to God unless he has the will to listen to truth. He who refuses to listen to truth ends by his heart having been sealed up, but he who is prepared to listen to truth is led up to it. The initiative first must come from man himself, the result then follows from God.

- 6 55. ^a*It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, and after weakness gave you strength ; then, after strength, caused weakness and old age. He creates what He pleases. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful.*³⁰²⁸

56. And on the day when the Hour shall arrive the guilty will swear that ^bthey tarried not save an hour—thus were they turned away *from the right path*.³⁰²⁹

57. But those who are given knowledge and faith will say, 'You have indeed tarried according to the Book of Allah, till the Day of Resurrection. And this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not *care to know*.'³⁰³⁰

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ۝٥٥

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ لَا مَلِئُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ ۝٥٦

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَ لِكِنِّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٥٧

^a40 : 68. ^b10 : 46 ; 46 : 36.

3028. Commentary :

The clause خلقكم من ضعف which literally means, He created you from weakness, really means that man has been created weak or in a state of weakness. This form of expression has been used to emphasize man's weakness, the words من ضعف signifying that he is the very embodiment of weakness. A parallel expression has been used in 21 : 38 where the expression خلق الانسان من عجل i.e. man has been created of haste, means that impatience and haste form a part of man's nature. The implication of the verse may be that from extremely insignificant beginnings the Arabs will rise to a very high political and spiritual stature through the Holy Prophet, and then after having attained the heights of glory and grandeur will relapse into their original obscurity and weakness. Or the verse may have a general application pointing to the law of the rise and fall of nations.

3029. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when the hour of the triumph of Islam arrives and disbelief suffers defeat, the disbelievers will realize to their mortification and sorrow that the time of their prosperity and glory was indeed very short. It was but an hour !

3030. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that when disbelievers will have realized to their discomfiture that the time of their prosperity and progress was very short, they will be told by true believers that according to Divine decree they (disbelievers) were left alone to indulge in vice and sin up to the Day of Resurrection i.e. till the advent of a Divine Prophet, when all their prosperity and grandeur was to have come to an end. Thus the words "Day of Resurrection" do not refer to Resurrection after death but to the rise and fall of nations in this world.

58. So "on that day, their excuses will not avail the wrongdoers; nor will they be allowed to make amends."^{3030A}

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. And truly, "We have set forth for men in this Qur'an every kind of parable, and indeed, if thou bring them a Sign, those who disbelieve will surely Say, 'You are but liars'."³⁰³¹

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ
مَثَلٍ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. "Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who have no knowledge."³⁰³²

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

^a16 : 85 ; 41 : 25 ; 45 : 36. ^b17 : 90 ; 39 : 28. ^c9 : 93 ; 16 : 109 ; 74 : 17.

The disbelievers or Christian nations of the West are here warned that their final destruction will take place after the renaissance of Islam in the Latter days and not, as they misunderstand, in the time of its first phenomenal rise and spread.

3030 A. Important Words :

يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ (allowed to make amends) is derived from عَتَبَ. They say عَتَبَ عَلَيْهِ i.e. he was angry with him ; he reproved or censured him. مَا عَتَبْتُ بِهِ means, I have not trodden upon the threshold of his door. اسْتَعْتَبَهُ means, he asked, solicited or sought his favour ; or he asked or requested him to be regarded with favour or to be taken into his favour ; or he desired or sought of him that he shall return to making him happy or to doing what was pleasing to him, from doing evil to him; he granted him his goodwill or favour; regarded him with goodwill; became pleased with him. عَتَبَةٌ means, the threshold of a door (Aqrab & Lane). In view of these different meanings of the root-word the clause وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ would mean:

- (a) They will not be allowed to approach the Divine threshold, i.e. they will be treated as rejected and condemned;
- (b) the time of their punishment having already arrived, they will not be permitted to make amends for the sins they would have committed;
- (c) no excuse in their defence will be accepted from them ; and
- (d) they will not be taken into God's favour.

3031. Important Words :

مَثَلٍ (parable) is derived from مَثَل (mathala) and means, a description, condition, state, case, etc.; (2) argument, reason; (3) discourse; (4) lesson or example; (5) a proverb; (6) a Sign; (7) a parable or similitude (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2 : 18,107 ; 6 : 39 & 14 : 36.

3032. Commentary :

The verse makes it clear that the hearts of only those people are "sealed" who reject Divine knowledge that comes to them through a Divine Reformer. The "sealing" of the hearts

61. So be thou patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty of faith make light of thee.³⁰³³

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفُّكَ الَّذِينَ
لَا يُوقِنُونَ ۝٦١

of disbelievers is the inevitable consequence of their own refusal to accept Divine knowledge.

3033. **Important Words :**

يَسْتَخِفُّكَ (make light of thee) is derived from

استخف. They say استخفه *i.e.* he incited him to ignorance or levity; he made him swerve from right opinion or judgment, (3) he held him in light estimation (Aqrab).

CHAPTER 31

LUQMĀN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation, Title and Context

This *Sūra* by common consent is considered to have been revealed at Mecca. Being the third of the ٱل group of *Sūrās* and having close kinship with the other members of that group in style and subject-matter, it is believed, like its predecessors, Al-‘Ankabūt and Al-Rūm, to have been revealed towards the middle of the Meccan period, or, as some say, in the sixth or seventh year of the Call.

The *Sūra* seems to derive its title from the 13th verse in which a non-Arab sage and seer, Luqmān by name, has been mentioned as giving a moral sermon to his son. Luqmān may stand for a Prophet or Divine Reformer. Apart from the beauty of the noble moral principles enunciated in the sermon, the reference to Luqmān, a non-Arab, as a great Divine sage, implies a basic religious truth, revealed to the world first of all by the Qur’ān, viz., that God raised Reformers among all nations and that revelation or Divine guidance is not the exclusive privilege of any particular people.

The preceding *Sūra*, Al-Rūm, ended on the note that the Qur’ān explains fully all those teachings that deal with the spiritual development and progress of man. But the disbelievers have not the eyes which can see the truth; their hearts are also sealed. They see Sign after Sign and yet go on harping on the tune that the Holy Prophet is a liar and a forger. The present *Sūra* opens with the solemn affirmation that the Holy Prophet is not a forger or a liar and that this Book, the Qur’ān, has been revealed to him by the Wise and All-Knowing God. It is full of wisdom; it leads an honest seeker after truth to the right path, and it is a source of Divine mercy to him. It is not, therefore, possible to deny it with honesty of purpose; only a perverse person would reject it.

It was further mentioned in the preceding *Sūra* that the cause of Islam will continue to prosper and triumph and disbelievers will meet with defeat, disgrace and humiliation. The present *Sūra* sheds some light on those noble moral principles by acting upon which nations and individuals can achieve success and prosperity and can rise to greatness and eminence.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* in its very beginning refers to the *sine qua non* of success—correct belief and right action—and proceeds to discuss some universal moral principles from the mouth of a

non-Arab sage—Luqmān. The most fundamental and basic principle referred to in the opening verses is the belief that God is One and that all other noble ideals flow from this belief. The principle, second in importance to Divine Unity, is that of man's obligations to man, of which the most essential are his obligations to parents. In between these two basic commandments a Muslim is taught to subordinate all his loyalties to God and to allow no other loyalty, not even loyalty to parents, to conflict or clash with his loyalty to His Creator. But under no circumstances should he cease to be kind and considerate and respectful to them. Next, it is stated that man's duty to God takes practical shape in the observance of Prayers and his obligations to mankind in doing good and abstaining from evil.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that when a true believer enters upon the noble and arduous task of preaching truth to men and calling upon them to reform themselves and give up wrong beliefs and evil practices, difficulties and impediments bar his way and he has to put up with opposition, abuse, and persecution. He is told to bear all this opposition and persecution with patience and fortitude. When he is not discouraged or dismayed by the opposition and persecution he has to face in the discharge of his great and noble task, success comes his way and large crowds of people give their allegiance to him. In the hour of public applause and acclamation he should not lose mental balance and should particularly be on his guard against conceit and arrogance.

Next, the *Sūra* refers to the laws of nature and the great powers of God implying that these laws are working in favour of Islam, and that God is at the back of the Muslims. They are, therefore, sure to win success, and the cause of Islam is sure to triumph and prosper. The *Sūra* ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that their day of reckoning is fast approaching and that at that time their wealth and children, their influence, power, and prestige will prove of no avail to them. On the contrary, their children will accept Islam and will be proud of spending all they possess in order to promote its cause.

سُورَةُ لُقْمَانَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³⁰³⁴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bAlif Lām Mīm.^{3034A}

الْم ②

3. "These are verses of the Book which is full of wisdom,"³⁰³⁵

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ③

4. ^dA guidance and a mercy for those who do good,

هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِلْحَسَنِينَ ④

5. "Those who observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt and who have firm faith in the Hereafter.

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ⑤

^a Se 1 : 1. ^b See 30 : 2. ^c 10 : 2 ; 31 : 2. ^d 16 : 90 ; 27 : 3. ^e 2 : 4 ; 5 : 56 ; 9 : 71 ; 27 : 4.

[3034. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

3034A. **Commentary :**

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2.

3035. **Commentary :**

The Qur'ān has variously described itself as follows:

"The Book full of wisdom" as in the present verse; "the Book of Allah" (2 : 102); "the Book" (5 : 16); "a Book whose verses have been made unchangeable and then they have been expounded in detail" (11 : 2); "an enlightening Book" (22 : 9); "a mighty Book" (41 : 42); "the Book inscribed" (52 : 3); "a well-preserved Book" (56 : 79); "the Qur'ān in Arabic" (12 : 3); "the illuminating Qur'ān" (15 : 2); the Great Qur'ān" (15 : 88); "the Qur'ān full of wisdom" (36 : 2);

"the Qur'ān full of exhortation" (38 : 2); "the noble Qur'ān" (56 : 78); "the wonderful Qur'ān" (72 : 2); and "the glorious Qur'ān" (85 : 22).

The Qur'ān is indeed such a wise, and wonderful Book that "not a single one of the great truths, principles, and ideals enumerated and proclaimed by it has been contradicted or falsified by ancient learning or science, nor by modern discoveries and inventions." It has eminently held its own, and proved equal to the exigencies of time, in every age and period.

Like the abbreviated letters which have been placed in the beginning of different *Sūrās*, the various qualifying words used for the Qur'ān in the above-mentioned *Sūrās* have a subtle connection with their subject-matter. A deep study of the context reveals the connection between the two.

6. "It is they who follow guidance from their Lord, and it is they who shall prosper.

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦﴾

7. And of men is he who takes idle tales in exchange for guidance to lead men astray from the path of Allah, without knowledge, and to make fun of it. For such there will be humiliating punishment.³⁰³⁶

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ
عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

8. And when Our Signs are recited to him, he turns away proudly, as though he heard them not, as if there were a heaviness in both his ears. So announce to him a painful punishment.³⁰³⁷

وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَكُنَّا مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ۖ كَانُوا لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا
كَانَ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ وَقَرَّ ۖ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٨﴾

9. Surely, those who believe and do good works—they will have Gardens of Delight,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾

10. Wherein they will abide. Allah has made a true promise; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٠﴾

a2 : 6.

3036. Commentary :

Life is a very serious thing. Man has been created to serve a very noble and grand purpose. To this seriousness and sublimity of human life, an emphatic and pointed reference has been made in the words "do you think that We have created you in vain and that you will not return to Us" (23 : 116). But in spite of this emphatic admonition, men of frivolous turn of mind fritter away their precious time and energy in vain pursuits and foolish diversions, treating the Signs of God lightly, with the result that (as the verse says) they meet with disgrace and failure in this

life, and an humiliating punishment awaits them in the Hereafter.

3037. Commentary :

The verse under comment explains another verse of the Qur'ān (2 : 8) wherein it is stated that God sets a seal on the hearts of disbelievers and on their ears and eyes. The present verse makes it clear that man first turns away disdainfully from truth, and behaves arrogantly, and turns a deaf ear to the Divine Message and Heavenly admonition, and then, as a result of his arrogant behaviour and attitude, his heart becomes, as it were, sealed and he is rendered spiritually blind and deaf.

11. "He has created the heavens without any pillars that you can see, and ^bHe has placed in the earth firm mountains that it may not quake with you, and He has scattered therein all kinds of creatures; and We have sent down water from the clouds, and ^ccaused to grow therein every noble species ³⁰³⁸

مَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ۚ وَأَلْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَأَسَىٰ أَنْ تَيَّيَدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ
ۚ أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ
كَرِيمٍ ۝

12. This is the creation of Allah. Now show me what others besides Him have created. Nay, but the wrongdoers are in manifest error.

إِذَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فَرَقًا ۖ فَرَّقُوا فِي مَا ذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
لِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ۝

R.2 13. And We bestowed wisdom on Luqmān, saying, 'Be grateful to Allah', for whoso is grateful, is grateful only for *the good* of his own soul. And ^awhoso is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy. ³⁰³⁹

لَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ
شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
مُبِينٌ ۝

^a13 : 3. ^b13 : 4. 15 : 20; 16 : 16; 77 : 28. ^c27 : 61; 50 : 8. ^d14 : 9.

3038. Commentary :

It should not be understood from the word ألقى which literally means, "He has cast" or "He has placed" that the mountains were placed on the earth from somewhere outside, after it had been created. Elsewhere the Qur'ān has used the word جعل (He made) to express the same sense which shows that the mountains formed a part and parcel of the earth and were not placed on it from outside.

Incidentally, the verse points to a truth which science has only recently discovered but which the Qur'ān revealed about 1400 years ago, viz., that mountains instead of being a cause of earthquakes, exert a stabilizing influence, rendering earth tremors a very infrequent occurrence.

This verse gives three arguments to prove the Oneness and Almightyness of God: (a) He is the Creator of heavens and the whole solar system; (b) He has created the earth and regulates, controls and guides all life on it; (c) He sends down water from heaven and gives a new life to the earth after it has become parched and dry. This means that God is the Creator of the Universe, its Controller and the Giver of life. These are essential attributes of a Supreme Being Who demands and commands our adoration and worship. See also 16 : 16.

3039. Important Words :

شكر (is grateful). شكر الله or شكره means, he thanked God or was grateful to Him; or he praised God for His beneficence; and acted in

14. And *remember* when Luqmān said to his son while exhorting him, 'O my dear son! associate not partners with Allah. Surely, associating partners with God is a grievous wrong.'³⁰⁴⁰

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَبْنَىٰ لَا تُشْرِكْ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ^{١٣}

15. "And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents—His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years—'Give thanks to Me and to thy parents. Unto Me is the *final* return.'³⁰⁴¹

وَوَضَّيْنَا لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِذَا دَانَ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا
عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفُضِّلَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ
إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ^{١٤}

⁴⁶ : 152 ; 19 : 33 ; 29 : 9 ; 46 : 16.

the manner incumbent on him in rendering Him obedience. شكر (thankfulness) is of three kinds: (1) with the heart; (2) with the tongue; and (3) with the limbs, and consists in requiting the benefit received according to its desert. Man's thankfulness to God consists in (a) his humility to Him; (b) his love of Him; (c) his knowledge of His bounties; (d) his eulogizing Him for it; and (e) his not making use of the benefits in a manner disliked by Him. شكر on the part of God consists in forgiving a person, or regarding him with favour and therefore rewarding him (Lane). See also 14 : 8.

Commentary :

Luqmān seems to be a non-Arab, very probably an Ethiopian. He is said to belong to Egypt or Nubia. By some he has also been identified with the Greek "Æsop." From the beautiful moral precepts he gave to his son which are embodied in the present and the next few verses Luqmān appears to be a Prophet of God. To know who Luqmān was is not of importance so much as the principle that God sent His Messengers among all people and that all those Messengers deserve our respect and reverence, and that Luqmān was one of them. Islam was

the first and the only religion to proclaim this principle which alone can form a sound and solid basis for peace among the followers of various Faiths.

3040. Commentary :

The first and basic principle of all religious teaching is that God is One. All other noble ideals flow from this principle. By worshipping any other thing or being beside God Who is the Creator, Lord and Sustainer, man degrades himself and stunts, stifles and stultifies his personality. So Luqmān began his moral sermon by laying stress on this most supreme of all religious beliefs.

3041. Commentary :

This and the next verse form a parenthetical clause and refer to the second most important duty of man, after his duty to God—his obligations to mankind, which begin with his obligations to his parents. He is told that he must be good and kind to his parents. Luqmān only referred to man's duty to God, but God Himself supplements his exhortation by adding man's duty to his parents and also gives the reason for doing so, viz., that parents undergo all sorts of sacrifice for their children, particularly the

16. 'And if they contend with thee to make thee set up equals with Me concerning which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not, but be a kind companion to them in *all* worldly affairs; and in *spiritual matters* follow the way of him who turns to Me. Then unto Me will be your return and I shall inform you of what you used to do'.³⁰⁴²

17. *Luqmān said*, 'O my dear son! even though it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and even though it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will surely bring it out. Verily, Allah is the Knower of all subtleties, All-Aware'.³⁰⁴³

18. 'O my dear son! "observe Prayer, and enjoin good, and forbid evil, and endure patiently whatever may befall thee. Surely, this is a matter of high resolve'.³⁰⁴⁴

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ
عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا
وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

يُبْنَىٰ إِلَيْهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي
صَحْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

يُبْنَىٰ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨﴾

49 : 71.

mother. She has, therefore, secured a special mention here.

3042. Commentary :

After being reminded of his duty to his parents, man is warned in the present verse not to forget that his first and foremost duty is to God, and that all other duties and loyalties are subordinate to, and proceed from, it. He is told that if his duty to parents appears to clash and conflict with his duty to God, his first loyalty is to his Creator. But in disregarding any of the wishes or commands of his parents which clash with his loyalty to God, he must not be arrogant or insolent to them, but should continue to show uniform courtesy, love and kindness to them.

3043. Commentary :

The verse points to an important law of nature, viz., that no action, good or bad, is in vain.

It leaves its permanent imprint. It is to this great truth that reference has also been made in 50 : 19.

3044. Commentary :

After belief, in the Oneness of God and in His attributes, becomes firmly established, man naturally feels attracted towards Him and wishes to worship Him, which in the form of Prayer is most essential for his spiritual development. And after he himself becomes true and sincere votary of His Creator, man's next duty lies in reforming his fellow-beings. But as soon as he enters upon this noble but very arduous task difficulties and impediments bar his way. He is told, in the verse, to put up with all sorts of hardships and privations that lie in the way of the discharge of his great duties. This is the significance of Luqmān's exhortation to his son "to endure patiently whatever may befall thee."

19. 'And turn not thy cheek away from men in pride, nor walk in the earth haughtily; surely Allah loves not any arrogant boaster.³⁰⁴⁵

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ۝١٩

20. 'And walk thou at a moderate pace, and lower thy voice; verily the most disagreeable of voices is the braying of the ass.³⁰⁴⁶

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ
كَأَنَّهُ الْأَصْوَاتُ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ۝٢٠

21. Have you not seen that Allah has pressed for you into service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and has completed His favours on you, both externally and internally? 'And among men there are some who dispute concerning Allah, without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book.³⁰⁴⁷

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً ۚ وَ
مِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى
وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ ۝٢١

^a17 : 38; 25 : 64.

^b49 : 34.

^c13 : 14; 22 : 4, 9

3045. Important Words :

تصعّر (turn in pride) is derived from صعر which means, he had a distortion in the face by reason of pride with a turning of the face on one side. They say صعره في خده i.e. in his cheek is a distortion arising from pride. صعر خده means, he turned away his cheek from the people on account of pride and dislike or contempt (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

When a man comes to acquire firm faith in God and His powers and attributes, and engages himself in Prayer, and exhorts other men to do good and right actions, and also patiently puts up with abuse and persecution which he has to face in the discharge of his difficult task, a new world opens up to him. God inspires him with His love and, as a result, people flock to him in large numbers. Then he is likely to become self-conceited and self-centred. Hence

Luqmān's warning to his son to be on his guard against this moral lapse.

3046. Commentary :

In this verse Luqmān impresses upon his son the supreme necessity of moderation and avoiding extremes.

3047. Important Words :

أسبغ (has completed) is derived from سبغ. They say سبغ العيش i.e. the life was or became pleasant and plentiful. أسبغ الله عليه النعمة means, God completed His favour upon him (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse embodies strong refutation of *Shirk* (associating false deities with God) and incidentally alludes to three kinds of arguments which help a man to arrive at a right understanding of any important problem, viz; (1) evidence of reason and commonsense; (2) arguments based

22. And when it is said to them, 'Follow that which Allah has revealed,' 'they say, 'Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers following.' What! even though Satan was inviting them to the punishment of the burning fire?³⁰⁴⁸

23. ^bAnd he who submits himself wholly to Allah, and is a doer of good, he has surely grasped the firm handle. With Allah *rests* the end of all affairs.³⁰⁴⁹

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ
مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ
يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٣٢﴾

وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ
الْأُمُورِ ﴿٣٣﴾

45 : 105; 10 : 79; 21 : 54. 62 : 113.

on observation and experience; and (3) arguments provided by Divine revelation. The verse purports to say that none of these supports *Shirk* or disbelief. The disbelievers can adduce no rational argument in support of their foolish beliefs. Neither are those beliefs supported and substantiated by observation or experience, nor do they receive support from revelation. The combined testimony of human reason and commonsense, of observation and experience and of Divine revelation, goes to show that belief in plurality of gods is a false and foolish belief. This is the significance of the words, *without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book*.

The verse further says that man is the noblest handiwork of God and the acme and peak of His creation. The universe has been created to serve him, the sun with the whole solar system and the earth with all that is on it have been made subservient to him. So when all things have been created for his sake, it is foolish on man's part first to set up equals with God and then to begin to worship and adore

the things which have been created for his use and service.

The verse further implies that when all the physical needs of man have been met and his smallest requirements are satisfied by God, it is inconceivable that He should have neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs.

The words *ظاهرة وباطنة* may signify all needs of man—physical and spiritual; material and intellectual; known and unknown.

3048. **Commentary :**

Man is so constituted that he is not easily persuaded to give up his old ideas and beliefs. The one constant obstacle that the Prophets of God have had to meet from disbelievers is that the latter would not give up their old ancestral ways and beliefs. Old superstitions indeed die hard.

3049. **Commentary :**

The words, "With Allah rests the end of all affairs." mean that it is God alone Who causes all actions to produce their results.

24. And *as for* him ^awho disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve thee. Unto Us is their return and We shall tell them what they did. Surely, Allah knows well what is in the breasts.

25. We shall let them enjoy themselves a little; then shall We drive them to severe torment.

26. ^bAnd if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely answer, 'Allah'. Say, 'All praise belongs to Allah.' But most of them know not.³⁰⁵⁰

27. ^cTo Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Verily, Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy.

28. ^dAnd if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise.³⁰⁵¹

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَجْزِيكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ

بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٤﴾

نَسْتَعْتُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ

اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ

الْحَيُّ ﴿٢٧﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ

يَمْدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ

اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

^a3 : 177; 35-40.

^b29 : 62; 39 : 39; 44 : 8.

^c2 : 285; 10 : 56; 24 : 65.

^d18 : 110.

3050. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that an intelligent study of the creation of the universe and of the perfect design and order that pervade and permeate it, leads to the one inevitable conclusion that there must be a Creator of this creation. This inference is inescapable. The words *لَيَقُولُنَّ* الله signify that disbelievers will have no option but to admit that it is Allah Who brought the whole universe into being. But in spite of this unwilling admission on their part, the perverse rejectors of truth refuse to admit the simple fact that when God has made so much provision for the physical and material needs of man, He

could not have failed to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. This refusal to accept a clear conclusion shows that disbelievers are an ignorant and perverse people. Moreover, while they admit in their heart of hearts that God is the sole Creator of the universe, their actions do not conform to their admission. They associate partners with Him. This fact also sets the seal upon their folly and ignorance.

3051. Commentary :

Over-awed by the vastness of the size of an object of nature or the extraordinary powers of a human being, men of low intellect and weak

29. Your creation and your resurrection are only like *the creation and resurrection of a single soul*. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.³⁰⁵²

مَا خَلَقَكُمْ وَلَا يَعْثُبُكُمْ إِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ
سَيِّئُ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٠٥٢﴾

30. Hast thou not seen that Allah makes the night pass into the day, and makes the day pass into the night, and He has pressed the sun and the moon into service; each pursuing its course till an appointed term, and that Allah is Aware of what you do?³⁰⁵³

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ الْبَيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ
فِي الْبَيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٠٥٣﴾

^a22 : 62; 35 : 14; 57 : 7. ^b7 : 55; 13 : 3; 35 : 14; 39 : 6.

faith are prone to ascribe Divine attributes to them. It is the untenability of this position that the verse under comment seeks to expose. It purports to say that disbelievers are over-awed into attributing Divine powers to a big object of nature, or a great man, while the great universe of which God is the sole Architect is an inexhaustible store-house of unfathomable mysteries, infinitely larger in number than the wonderful things that meet the eye. So it is absurd on the part of disbelievers to take an object of nature or a human being as God on the score of his or its being seemingly extraordinary.

It may also be noted that numbers "7" and "70" are used in Arabic to denote a very large number, and not exactly "seven" and "seventy" as ordinary numerals.

3052. Commentary :

The verse tells disbelievers that all human beings, great or small, are subject to the same laws of nature and that the doors of progress and advancement are equally open to

all of them and, therefore, they themselves can be as great as those whose greatness inspires them with such awe that they take them for gods.

The verse may point to yet another very important fact, *viz.*, that the rise or fall of nations and communities is subject to the same laws of nature as is the progress or degradation of individuals.

3053. Commentary :

The verse under comment further develops the theme of its predecessor and says that nations and individuals advance and decay as they observe or ignore the laws that govern their rise and fall. Uniform prosperity or unrelieved misery has never been the lot of a people for all time. The condition of a people or individual changes with a corresponding change in their or his attitude and behaviour. The natural law of the day following the night, and *vice versa* operates with equal force in regard to the fate of nations as well as individuals.

31. That is because it is Allah alone Who is the True God, and whatever they call upon beside Him is falsehood, and because it is Allah alone Who is the Most High, the Incomparably Great.³⁰⁵⁴

R. 4 32. Dost thou not see that the ships sail on the sea by the favour of Allah, that He may show you of His Signs? Therein surely are Signs for everyone who is patient and grateful.³⁰⁵⁵

33. ^bAnd when waves engulf them like *so many* coverings, they call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in faith; but when He brings ^cthem safe to land, then *only* some of them keep to the right course. And none denies Our Signs save every perfidious, ungrateful person.³⁰⁵⁶

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ
الْبَاطِلُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣١﴾

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ الْفُلَكَ تَجْرِىٰ فِى الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ لِيُرِيْكَ
مِّنْ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبّٰرٍ شٰكِرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

وَاِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوْا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ
لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ فَوَقَّعَهُمْ مَّقْصِدٌ
وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيٰتِنَا اِلَّا كُلُّ خَتّٰرٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a17 : 67; 30 : 47; 45 : 13.

^b10 : 23; 17 : 67; 29 : 66.

^c10 : 24; 17 : 68.

3054. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the whole phenomenon of the creation of universe and the laws that govern it and also those that determine the rise and fall of nations lead to but one conclusion that Allah is the Only True God, and that all else is false and perishable.

3055. Commentary :

The sailing of ships, as is mentioned in the present verse, is indeed a great Divine boon. Much of the prosperity of mankind depends on it. The greatest Sea-Power is generally the richest and the most powerful nation in the world.

3056. Important Words :

ختار (the perfidious) is derived from ختر. They say ختره i.e. he acted or behaved towards him with perfidy, treachery or unfaithfulness, or with the foulest perfidy or treachery or unfaithfulness

or with deceit, guile, or in a bad or corrupt manner. ختر بالعهد means he was unfaithful to the covenant. ختار means, one who acts treacherously or with perfidy or with the foulest perfidy or with deceit or guile and does so frequently (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse refers to a very common characteristic of a *Mushrik* (polytheist). He is weak of faith and is very superstitious. Even a small misfortune is sufficient to frighten and upset him because his faith is only a jumble of make-beliefs, hearsays and superstitions. In difficulty he prays to God but when out of it he is his old self. Such, however, is not the case of a true believer. He is grateful to God when he receives a Divine favour, and is firm and steadfast in faith when a misfortune overtakes him. He never loses his balance of mind—neither in prosperity nor in adversity.

34. O men, seek protection with your Lord and fear ^athe day when the father will not be of *any* avail to his son, nor will the son at all be of any avail to his father. Allah's promise is surely true. So let not worldly life beguile you, nor let the Deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَاحْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا يَجْزِي
وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٍ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ
شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمُ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. Verily, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. ^bAnd He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.³⁰⁵⁷

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ
مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا
وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a2 : 124; 82 : 20.

^b30 : 25; 42 : 29.

3057. Commentary :

The *Sūra* ends by reverting to its basic theme, viz., the ultimate triumph of Islam; and mentions five important facts concerning it: (1) With God alone rests the knowledge of the hour of final overthrow of disbelief and the triumph of Islam. (2) He alone knows when the condition of a people demands the sending down of Divine revelation and so He has revealed the Qur'ān in the fulness of time. (3) To God alone belongs the knowledge whether the generations yet unborn will accept Islam or stick to disbelief, i.e. the sons and grandsons of the leaders of disbelief who are now fighting Islam tooth and

nailed, will enter its fold and will willingly give their lives to safeguard it and further its cause. (4) No one knows what he will earn on the morrow i.e. the disbelievers do not know that all their efforts against Islam will prove futile and abortive. (5) The leaders of disbelief who have turned the Holy Prophet and Muslims out of their hearths and homes will themselves meet death away from their homes. The reference in this clause may also be to the propagation of Islam by early Muslims, signifying that they will go to far-off lands to preach the Message of Islam and the end of their earthly lives would come in places far-removed from their homelands.

CHAPTER 32

AL-SAJDAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

The name of the *Sūra* seems to have been derived from verse 16th where the Faithful are spoken of as falling down in prostration when the Signs of their Lord are recited to them. The *Sūra* being the last of the group of *الم* Chapters possesses a close kinship and resemblance in style and contents with its three predecessors. By common consent it is also regarded as having been revealed at Mecca.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

The preceding *Sūra* had ended with the statement that God alone knows when a particular people are to rise or fall and that He alone provides for the physical needs of man and his moral and spiritual requirements. The present *Sūra* opens with the declaration that the Qur'ān has been revealed by God Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Lord of all the worlds, which means that in His hands lie all those means upon which the progress and prosperity of nations and individuals depend and that He alone controls the causes that lead to their decline and downfall. The Qur'ān has been revealed to warn those people to whom no Warner had come for a long time so that by profiting by the timely warning they might accept truth and make progress.

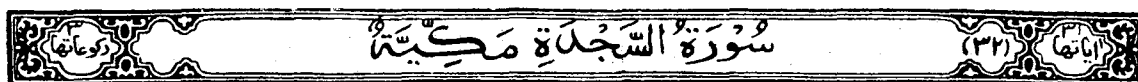
Subject-Matter

The main theme of the *Sūra* is the ultimate triumph of Islam and the failure and defeat of disbelief and idolatry. The *Sūra* opens with a strong repudiation of the disbelievers' charge that the Qur'ān is a forgery and the Holy Prophet an impostor. The Prophet, it says, is not an impostor because impostors have never been known to have success in their missions whereas the cause of the Holy Prophet is advancing by leaps and bounds; neither could the Qur'ān be a forgery because it has been revealed in the fulness of time and in accordance with the demands of truth and justice and fulfils all the moral and spiritual needs and requirements of man and because also the whole universe seems to be working in support and furtherance of its Message. The *Sūra* then makes a little digression and makes a prophecy that after its initial phenomenal progress Islam will receive a temporary set-back; a comparative eclipse of a thousand years which will be followed by a second renaissance, as a result of which it will regain its pristine glory and march on a course of uniform success. Next, the *Sūra* gives a beautiful illustration how from very insignificant beginnings Islam will grow in strength, expand and spread and will become a mighty force. The

illustration is taken from the creation of man who is brought into being from mere clay and after passing through a long process of development becomes a full-fledged human being, the acme and pride of the whole creation and God's noblest handiwork.

Further on, we are told that when a new Divine Message comes into the world, those to whom it is addressed become split up into two distinct groups. Those who accept and follow that Message become the recipients of Divine favours and blessings and those who reject it meet with disappointment, frustration and defeat. Incidentally the *Sūra* sheds some light on the nature of rewards and punishments of the life to come, which are spiritual representations of the deeds and works done by man in this life. The words that describe their form and nature are used in a metaphorical sense. The rewards of Paradise are not material because as the Holy Prophet has said, "No eye has seen them, nor has any ear heard of them, nor can human mind conceive or form an idea of them" (Bukhārī, *kitāb bad' al-khalq*).

Towards its close the *Sūra* sums up its central theme, viz., that the cause of Islam will grow and prosper because, not only is the Holy Prophet a true Messenger of God and not a forger and fabricator, but also because his advent has been foretold by Moses, the great Israelite Prophet (Deut. 18 : 18). The *Sūra* further says that the advent of the Holy Prophet is not anything novel. Just as in the physical world when the earth becomes parched and scorched, God sends down rain and it begins to vibrate with a new life, in the same way, in the spiritual realm, when mankind gropes and flounders in spiritual darkness, a Divine Messenger is raised and a spiritually dead people receive a new life through him. All the Prophets of God were raised when their peoples became spiritually dead, and so has the Holy Prophet of Islam come in the fulness of time.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³⁰⁵⁸

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bAlif Lām Mīm.^{3058A}

الْم ②

3. "The revelation of the Book—there is no doubt about it—is from the Lord of the worlds."³⁰⁵⁹

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ③

4. Do they say, 'He has forged it?' Nay, it is the truth from thy Lord, ^athat thou mayest warn a people to whom no Warner has come before thee, that they may be guided.³⁰⁶⁰

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ④

^aSee 1 : 1.

^bSee 30 : 2.

^c20 : 5; 40 : 3; 46 : 3.

^d28 : 47; 36 : 7.

3058. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

3058A. **Commentary :**

The abbreviated letters ^{الم} have a subtle and far-reaching connection with the subject of the revelation of the Qur'ān because all the *Sūrās* having these abbreviated letters in their beginning, viz., the 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 29th, 30th, 31st *Sūrās* and the present one, open with this important subject, which is quite significant. See also 2 : 2.

3059. **Commentary :**

The verse may possess one or all the following meanings :

(1) There is no doubt in the fact that this Book has been revealed by the Lord of all the worlds.

(2) The revelation of this Book in which there is no doubt is from the Lord of all the worlds.

(3) The fact that this Book contains all the conceivable beauties and excellences which a revealed Scripture must possess, leaves no doubt in its being revealed by the Lord of the worlds.

(4) Since this Book has undoubtedly been revealed by the Lord of the worlds its teachings are meant for the whole of mankind.

3060. **Important Words :**

الحق (the truth) is substantive-noun from حق (*haqqa*) which means, it was or became just, proper, right, true, authentic, genuine, substantial or real; it was or became an established fact or confirmed truth; it was or became binding, incumbent or due or it was or became suitable to the requirements of wisdom, justice, truth and right (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2 : 43, 148.

Commentary :

In view of the different meanings of the word الحق the verse would mean that the fact that the Qur'ān is الحق i.e. it has been revealed

5. "Allah! it is Who created the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, in six periods; then He settled Himself on the Throne. You have no helper or intercessor beside Him. Will you not then reflect?"³⁰⁶¹

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي
سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ
مَنْ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ٥

a7 : 55; 11 : 8; 25 : 60.

consistently with the requirements of wisdom, truth and justice, constitutes an infallible argument that it is not a forgery. Long centuries had passed since no Divine Messenger had appeared among the Arabs. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that a Prophet should have been sent to these people. The Holy Prophet has come in the fulness of time, in accordance with the Divine plan, and the prophecies of God's great Prophets such as Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, Jesus, etc.

3061. Commentary :

The present *Sūra* is the last of the *الم* group. The central theme of these four *Sūrās* (29-32), as shown above, is the regeneration of a people who had sunk deep in the morass of moral turpitude and who were now to be raised to the apex of spiritual glory through the Holy Prophet Muḥammed. This awakening to new life of a morally dead people has been adduced as an argument in support of Resurrection and the Hereafter. In all these *Sūrās* this subject has been introduced with reference to the creation of the universe.

The words *سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ* (six periods) point to a Divine law which works with equal force in both the physical and spiritual worlds, viz.,

that in order to find their fullest development all things have to pass through six stages of evolution and it is at the seventh stage that they attain perfection and completion. Likewise, Islam would also pass through six stages of expansion and would see its completion in the seventh stage. (For a fuller discussion of this subject see "Tafsīr Kabīr" by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Maṣīḥ II, under 10 : 4).

The words, "then He settled Himself on the Throne" point to the fact that just as after the creation of the physical universe God settled Himself on the Throne, which means that all the affairs of the universe began to be conducted through fixed laws of nature, similarly after the establishment of Islam on earth, all spiritual progress will be attainable only through that faith.

The word *عرش* (Throne) represents the transcendent attributes of God, i.e. such attributes as are God's exclusive prerogatives and are not found in any other being. These attributes are eternal and unchangeable and are manifested through God's attributes of similitude. The principal attributes of similitude are *رب العالمين* (Lord of the worlds); *الرحمن* (the Gracious); *الرحيم* (the Merciful) and *مالك يوم الدين* (Lord of the Day of Judgment). See also 7 : 55; 10 : 4 & 23 : 17.

6. He will plan the *Divine* Ordinance from the heaven unto the earth, then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years according to what you reckon.³⁰⁶²

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ
كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ①

7. "Such is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Merciful,"³⁰⁶³

ذَلِكَ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ②

434 : 4; 59 : 23.

3062. Commentary :

As mentioned above the principal theme of the *Sūra* under comment is the progressive expansion and eventual triumph of Islam. In the present verse, however, reference has been made to a very serious crisis that was destined to come over Islam in its chequered career. Islam was to pass through a period of sustained progress and prosperity during the first three centuries of its life. The Holy Prophet is reported to have pointedly alluded to this fact in a well-known saying, viz., خَيْرُ الْقُرُونِ قُرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمُ الْخ. i.e. the best century is the one in which I live, then the next century, then the century after that. Then there will spread falsehood at the hands of people who will take pride in their wealth and riches and will grow fat on the earnings of others (Tirmidhī & Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Shahādāt*). As foretold in this saying of the Prophet, Islam began to decline after the first three centuries of uninterrupted conquests and growing prosperity, till it suffered a very serious check in about 271 A.H. when its gradual decline set in. The process of decline and decay continued till it reached its nadir in the next one thousand years. It is to this period of a thousand years

that reference has been made in the words, *then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years*. In another of his sayings the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that Faith will ascend to the Pleiades and a man of Persian descent, namely the Promised Messiah, will bring it back to the earth (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Tafsīr*). With the appearance of the Promised Messiah in the 14th century A.H., the process of decay has been arrested and a renaissance of Islam has taken place. The indications are, and prophecies in Divine Scriptures and those in the *Ḥadīth* lend support to the inference, that the present renaissance of Islam will extend over a much longer period and its spiritual conquests will not stop unless they have embraced in their orbit almost the entire globe.

3063. Commentary :

The words, "Such is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise," are very challenging and constitute a grand prophecy, viz., that it is God's unalterable decree that the glory and grandeur of Islam of which the foundations have been laid by the Promised Messiah will continue to advance till Islam achieves its destined goal.

8. Who has made perfect everything He has created. "And He began the creation of man from clay."³⁰⁶⁴

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ
مِنْ طِينٍ^٥

9. Then He made his progeny from an extract of an insignificant fluid.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ^٦

10. "Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit. And He has given you ears, and eyes, and hearts. But little thanks do you give!"³⁰⁶⁵

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ^٧

^a6 : 3; 15 : 27; 37 : 12.

^b77 : 21.

^c15 : 30; 38 : 73.

3064. Commentary :

In this and the next few verses an illustration is given of how Islam from its very small beginnings will, as the result of its present renaissance, spread and become a mighty force. The illustration is to be found in the creation of man. Man's origin is from mere clay and after going through a long process of development he is born a full-fledged human being, the apex and pride of the whole creation. In the same way, the verse implies that Islam will rise from its present very insignificant beginnings and will march from strength to strength. For a detailed explanation of how, starting from mere earth or clay and going through different stages of evolution, man takes his birth, see. 23 : 13, 15.

3065. Important Words :

روح (His spirit). روح is derived from راح, which means, he was brisk, lively, active; it became cool and pleasant. روح means, soul or

spirit; the subtle substance in man which is the principle of vitality and of sensation, and of voluntary motion; the breath of life; Divine revelation or inspiration; the Qur'ān; angel; joy and happiness; mercy (Lane). See also 4 : 172 & 16 : 3.

Commentary :

روح or spirit in the verse may signify the Divine soul, or spirit, or that subtle and incomprehensible thing in man which distinguishes him from, and establishes his superiority over, the animal kingdom and invests him, so to say, with Divine attributes. The word, as given under "Important Words," may here also signify Divine revelation, particularly the Qur'ān. The verse signifies that after the physical development of the embryo becomes complete in the womb, it receives a soul; or the meaning may be that, after the spiritual development of a man becomes complete, he receives Divine revelation.

11. And they say, 'What! when we are lost in the earth, shall we then be *raised up in the form of a new creation*?' Nay, "but they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord."³⁰⁶⁶

12. Say, 'The angel of death that has been put in charge of you will cause you to die; then to your Lord will you be brought back.'

2 13. If only thou couldst see when the guilty will hang down their heads before their Lord, *and say*, 'Our ^bLord, we have seen and we have heard, so send us back that we may do good works for *now* we are convinced';^{3066A}

14 And if We had *enforced* Our will, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me has come true: "I will fill Hell with Jinn and men all together."³⁰⁶⁷

15. So taste ye *the punishment of your deeds* for you forgot the meeting of this day of yours. We *too* have forgotten you. Taste ye then the lasting punishment because of that which you used to do.

وَقَالُوا إِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ
بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَفِرُونَ ⑪

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّكُم مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ⑫

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُرْسَلُونَ نَاكِسُو رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا
مُقِرُّونَ ⑬

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى وَلَٰكِن حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ
مِِّى لَا مَلَكَ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْإِنسِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ⑭
فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ
وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ⑮

^a18 : 106; 29 : 24; 30 : 17. ^b23 : 101; 35 : 38; 39 : 59. ^c11 : 120; 15 : 44 ; 38 : 85-86.

3066. Commentary :

The argument has been put forward again and again in the Qur'ān that if God can create and develop from mere earth a wonderful creation, He can also give man a new life after he is dead.

3066 A. Commentary :

It has always happened that at the time of the appearance of a Divine Reformer, the people to whom his Message is addressed become divided into two groups: (a) those who accept his Message and follow him, and (b) those who

deny and reject his Message and oppose and persecute him. This and the following several verses refer to and describe the condition and attitude of these two groups of men.

3067. Commentary :

The reference in the words "I will fill Hell with Jinn and men all together" is to 15 : 43-44 where it is stated, "such of the erring ones as choose to follow thee, surely Hell is the promised place for them," meaning thereby that only the "erring ones" will be cast into Hell.

16. Only those believe in Our Signs who, when they are reminded of them, ^afall down prostrate and celebrate the praises of their Lord, and they are not proud.

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا
وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ١٦

17. Their sides keep away from their beds; and ^bthey call on their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed on them. ^{3067A}

تَتَجَاوَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا
وَطَمَعًا ۚ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ١٧

18. And no soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden for them, as a reward for *the good* they used to do. ³⁰⁶⁸

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ١٨

19. ^cIs he, then, who is a believer like one who is disobedient? They are not equal.

أَفَنَنْكَرَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ أَنْ يَسْعَىٰ مَنِاعٍ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ١٩

^a17 : 108; 110; 19 : 59.

^b21 : 91.

^c40 : 59.

3067A. Important Words :

تتجافى (keep away) is derived from جفا which means, it did not cleave to its place. They say جفا الرجل *i.e.* he turned away, shunned or avoided or he withdrew to a distance, from the man. جفت المرأة ولدها means, the woman neglected her child. جفا جنبه عن الفراش او تجافى عنه means, his side was restless on the bed; his side did not cleave to its place on the bed; his side became removed or withdrawn from it (Lane & Aqrab).

3068. Commentary :

This verse has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a well-known ḥadīth. Describing the form and nature of the blessings and comforts of Paradise, he is reported to have said :

لا عين رأت ولا أذن سمعت ولا خطر على قلب بشر
“No eye has seen it (the blessings of Paradise) nor has any ear heard of them nor can human mind conceive them” (Bukhārī, *kitāb bad’ al-Khalq*). This ḥadīth as well as the verse under comment clearly show that the blessings of the life to come will not be material, but rather spiritual; they will be the spiritual representations of good deeds and actions the righteous believers might have done in the present life. The words used to describe them in the Qur’ān have been used only in a metaphorical sense. See also 2 : 26.

The verse may also mean that Divine boons and blessings that are awaiting the righteous believers in the next world are far too good and too plentiful, even to be imagined or conceived. They will be far beyond the widest stretch of human imagination.

20. As for those "who believe and do good works, they will have Gardens of Eternal Abode as an entertainment, for what they used to do.

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ
الْأُولَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

21. And as for those who are disobedient, their abode will be the fire. ^bEvery time they desire to come forth therefrom, they will be turned back into it, and it will be said to them, 'Taste ye the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny.'^{3068A}

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوِيهِمُ النَّارُ كُلَّمَا أَدَاؤُنَ أَنْ
يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ بِهِ تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

22. And most surely "We will make them taste of the nearer punishment before the greater punishment, so that they may return to Us with repentance."³⁰⁶⁹

وَلَنذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ
الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

23. And who does greater wrong than he who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and then turns away from them? We will surely punish the guilty.³⁰⁷⁰

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا
إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِبُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a30 : 16; 35 : 8, 42 : 23, 45 : 31.

^b5 : 38; 22 : 23.

^c52 : 48.

3068A. Commentary :

The reference in the word "fire" in this verse seems to be to the punishment which the sinners suffer in this life, possibly the punishment of war. The words, "every time they desire to come forth therefrom, they will be turned back into it," support this inference. The whole of humanity, particularly the materialistic Western nations, have gone to rack and ruin by constant wars. Millions of lives have been lost in these wars and many more men have been maimed and mutilated, and property beyond calculation has been destroyed. And yet like the sword of Democles the dread of more terrible wars is constantly hanging over humanity's head.

3069. Commentary :

The expressions العذاب الأدنى (the nearer punishment) and العذاب الأكبر (the greater punishment) may respectively signify: (1) afflictions of the present life and those of the Hereafter; or (2) the defeat of the Quraish in the Battle of Badr and the Fall of Mecca when their power was finally and completely broken; or (3) smaller miseries and misfortunes which befall a disbelieving people by way of warning before their final destruction.

3070. Commentary :

That the enemies of truth and the rejectors of the Divine Message have never prospered is writ large on the pages of history.

- 3 24. "And We did give Moses the Book—be not therefore in doubt as to meeting with Him—and We made it a guidance for the Children of Israel.³⁰⁷¹

25. ^bAnd We made from among them leaders, who guided *the people* by Our command, whilst they were steadfast and had firm faith in Our Signs.

26. "Verily, thy Lord—He will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that in which they disagree.³⁰⁷²

27. Does it not guide them how many a generation We have destroyed before them, amid whose dwellings they *now* walk about? In that surely are Signs. Will they not then hearken?

28. Have they not seen that We drive the water to the dry land and produce thereby ^dcrops of which their cattle eat, and they themselves *also*? Will they not then see?³⁰⁷³

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَلَا تَكُنْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ
بِقَائِهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۝٣٢

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لِمَا صَبَرُوا
كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ ۝٣٥

نَّ رَبِّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا
يُخْتَلِفُونَ ۝٣٦

وَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ
مَشُورًا فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً أَفَلَا
تَسْمَعُونَ ۝٣٧

لَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ
نُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ
لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ۝٣٨

^a2 : 88; 17 : 3; 23 : 50. ^b2 : 125; 21 : 74. ^c4 : 142; 22 : 70; 39 : 4. ^d10 : 25; 20 : 55; 25 : 50

3071. Commentary :

The pronoun *a* in the expression لِقَائِهِ may be taken as referring to God or to the Book. In the second case the meaning would be, "be not therefore in doubt about receiving a perfect Book thyself."

3072. Commentary :

The reference in 'the Day of Resurrection' is very probably to the Battle of Badr, which has

also been called the Day of Discrimination (Decision at another place in the Qur'ān (8 : 42) A great decision was made on that day. The forces of darkness were routed and truth came into its own.

3073. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the disbelievers of Quraish have rejected the Divine Message on the plea that they "have never heard of the like

29. And they say, 'When will this victory *come*, if you are truthful?'

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. Say, 'On the day of victory the believing of the disbelievers will not avail ³⁰⁷⁴ them, nor will they be granted respite.'

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيْمَانُهُمْ

وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. So turn away from them, and "wait. They are also waiting.

فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرِ إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَضِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

^a10 : 103; 11 : 123.

of this in their forebears of yore" (28 : 37). But don't they see, the verse seems to say to them, that before their very eyes there takes place in the physical world the phenomenon that when the earth becomes parched and scorched, God sends down rain from heaven and the dead earth begins to vibrate with new life. In the same way when the world suffers from spiritual and moral death, God sends down spiritual rain from heaven *i.e.* Divine revelation, to resuscitate it.

3074. **Commentary :**

"The day of victory" mentioned in this verse is the day of the Battle of Badr. That day has also been called the Day of Decision in the Qur'ān (8 : 42) because on that day God gave His judgment which the disbelievers had sought in the words: "O Allah, if this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from heaven or bring down upon us a grievous punishment" (8 : 33).

CHAPTER 33

AL - AḤZĀB

(Revealed after Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

The *Sūra* takes its title from the word احزاب *i.e.* the confederated tribes (v. 21). The whole of Arabia instigated by Banū Naḍīr, the banished Jewish tribe of Medina, had formed itself into a grand confederacy and had marched against Medina to deliver a crushing blow to the rising power of Islam. The confederates totally failed in their nefarious design and Islam came out of this ordeal with its power and prestige greatly enhanced.

The whole of the *Sūra* was admittedly revealed at Medina. There is sufficient internal evidence to show that its revelation ranged from 5th to 7th year of the Hijra. possibly up to the 8th or 9th.

In the preceding few *Sūrās* of the الم group, the prophecy was repeatedly and emphatically made that Islam would continue to make progress and gather strength, and disbelief would face defeat and discomfiture till the whole of Arabia would accept Islam, and idolatry would disappear from the country, never to return. In the immediately preceding *Sūra*, Al-Sajdah, it was stated that Muslims would be favoured with all sorts of physical comforts and material prosperity. They would enjoy prosperity and prestige for a thousand years and then darkness would enshroud the world and Divine Light would ascend to heaven and Muslims would fall on evil days and Islam would decline. Towards the end of that *Sūra* the disbelievers had tauntingly asked as to when the prophecy about the victory of Islam and its great spread and expansion would be fulfilled. That question has received an emphatic answer in the present *Sūra*. It is stated that prophecy about the rise and progress of Islam has already been clearly fulfilled and Islam has become a great power. A somewhat detailed description is given of the Battle of the Ditch in order to show that, having realised that Islam was fast gaining ground and that it was for them the question of now or never, the forces of darkness made one last attempt to deliver Islam a *coup de grace*. The whole of Arabia rose like one man and a mighty force of 10,000 to 20,000 strong marched on Medina. But the disbelievers totally failed in their evil design. The confederated armies were completely routed and dispersed. Henceforward the idol-worshippers of Arabia never had the courage to take the field against Islam. They quite despaired of arresting its progress and Islam was now definitely in the ascendant.

Summary of Subject-Matter

With the accession to Islam of great political power and prestige and with its emergence as a full-fledged State, the ordinances of the *Shari'at* began to be revealed in quick succession to guide Muslims in political and social matters. The *Sūra* embodies several such ordinances. It opens with an injunction to the Holy Prophet to put complete trust in God as very hard days were still ahead of him. He is warned that his enemies will conduct a false campaign of calumny and vilification against him and Islam will meet some of its greatest crises. At the outset the *Sūra* abolishes a deep-rooted custom of the Arabs. The abolition, later on, was to prove a source of great mental anguish and worry to the Holy Prophet. It says that mere calling a person one's son cannot make him one's real son, neither can mere words of the mouth evoke in one's mind the feelings which one entertains for one's real son nor can such words alter hard facts of life. After abolishing the custom of adoption, the *Sūra* proceeds to refer to a very deep and real spiritual relationship that subsists between the Holy Prophet and Muslims. In his capacity as their spiritual father he stands closer to them than even their own selves, and his wives being their spiritual mothers should be treated by them with greater regard and respect than the mothers that have given them birth, because spiritual relationship stands on a much higher plane than physical relationship.

After this, the *Sūra* gives a somewhat detailed description of the Battle of the Ditch which was the fiercest encounter in which the Muslims had so far been engaged. The whole of Arabia had risen like one man against Islam and a well-equipped army, numbering from 10,000 to 20,000 strong, had marched on Medina. The Muslims were a paltry 1200, though, according to some writers the total number of those employed in digging the Ditch including women and children was in the neighbourhood of 3000. The combat was quite unequal. The Muslims were in sore straits. Their apparently hopeless condition is graphically portrayed in the Quranic words: "They came upon you from above you, and from below you, and *your* eyes became distracted, and *your* hearts reached to the throats, and you thought *diverse* thoughts about Allah. There *and then* were the believers *sorely* tried and they were shaken with a violent shaking" (11-12). When matters came to such a pass, God sent His hosts and the powerful enemy was routed and scattered.

In the next few verses the *Sūra* refers to the well-known historical phenomenon that while in a religious community there is no dearth of sincere and devoted followers, there are also to be found in its ranks hypocrites and the weak of faith. It is to these "Hypocrites" in Medina that the *Sūra* refers in vv. 13-28. They loudly professed to be true followers of Islam but when Medina was attacked by a mighty force, they asked to be excused from fighting on the side of Muslims on very lame excuses. They broke their plighted word and, therefore, were warned that by violating their most solemn pledge they would not be able to avert the terrible fate that was in store for them. The Banū Quraizah dishonoured their pledge and left Muslims in the lurch when the latter were hemmed in on all sides and the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance. After the confederates dispersed, the Holy Prophet marched against them and they received condign and deserved punishment.

As a result of the Battle of the Ditch and of the subsequent banishment of the Banū Quraizah large booty fell into the hands of Muslims. They were promised more conquest and wealth. From a persecuted and economically very poor minority they had grown into a rich, powerful and prosperous community. But material wealth brings in its train worldly-mindedness, a desire for ease and comfort and a disinclination towards service and sacrifice. This is a state of affairs which a Reformer has specially to guard against. As love of ease and comfort generally makes appearance first in the domestic circle and as the members of the Holy Prophet's household were to serve as a model in social behaviour, it was in the fitness of things that they should have been required to set an example in self-denial. It is to this life of self-abnegation on the part of the Holy Prophet's wives that reference has been made in the *Sūra*. The Holy Prophet's wives were asked to make a choice between a life of comfort and ease, and the austere companionship of the Holy Prophet; and they lost no time in making their choice. They preferred the Prophet's company. They were further told to set an example in piety, righteous and pious conduct, as befitted the wives of the greatest of God's Prophets, and in preserving the dignity and decorum of their exalted position by keeping to their houses and by teaching to Muslims the precepts and commandments of their religion.

The *Sūra*, then, proceeds to make a reference to Zainab's marriage with Zaid, the Holy Prophet's freed slave. The failure of Zainab's marriage with Zaid and her subsequent marriage with the Holy Prophet, served a double purpose. The Prophet by giving in marriage Zainab, his own cousin and a full-blooded Arab lady, intensely proud of her ancestry and exalted social position, to a freed slave, had sought to level to the ground all those invidious class distinctions and divisions from which Arabian society had suffered. According to Islam all men are free and all are equal in the sight of God. The Prophet carried into actual practice this noble ideal of Islam by giving the hand of his own cousin to a freed slave.

Next, the *Sūra* goes on to remove a possible misgiving to which the abolition of the custom of adoption might have given rise, viz., that in the absence of real sons the Holy Prophet will die issueless and thus his Movement will wither and die out for want of an heir. It says that it was God's own plan that the Prophet should have no male issue; but this did not mean that he would be issueless since he was the spiritual father of the whole of mankind. This was not an empty claim. As parctical proof of this claim he would bring into being a community of righteous and most loyal spiritual sons.

The *Sūra* further says that since the Holy Prophet is the spiritual father of the Faithful, his wives are their spiritual mothers, and therefore marriage with them, after the death of the Prophet, is a grievous sin. The Holy Prophet himself is told that he is not to divorce anyone of his existing wives, nor to add to their number. The wives of the Holy Prophet then, are enjoined that, consistently with their dignity as "Mothers of the Faithful," they should observe certain rules regarding dress, etc. when going out. This injunction enjoining privacy and decorum applies equally to all Muslim women.

Then the *Sūra* says that though by the great accession to the political power and prestige of Islam, consequent on the defeat and dispersion of the confederated armies and the virtual elimination of the Banū Quraiẓah—the last Jewish tribe in Medina—the capacity of disbelievers for creating mischief has greatly decreased, the “Hypocrites” will not desist from indulging in evil designs against Muslims but they will always meet with complete frustration and failure and the Islamic State will become firmly established and will continue to prosper.

Towards its close the *Sūra* points to the high destiny of man and his great responsibilities. It purports to say that man is the acme and apex of God’s creation. He has been endowed with great powers and capabilities which have been denied to other beings and, therefore, he alone among all creation can, by acting upon the laws of the *Shari‘at*, imbibe and demonstrate in his person Divine attributes. It is for the achievement by man of this noble object of his creation that God has been sending His Messengers and Prophets, but when these Prophets come, some people accept them and receive Divine favours while others choose the path of denial and incur His displeasure.

سُورَةُ الْأَحْزَابِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

1. "In the name of Allah the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁰⁷⁵

2. O thou Prophet, seek protection in Allah, and follow not *the wishes of* the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.^{3075A}

3. ^bAnd follow that which is revealed to thee from thy Lord. Verily, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.

4. ^cAnd put thy trust in Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Guardian.³⁰⁷⁶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ②

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ③

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ④

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b7 : 204; 10 : 110; 11 : 16; 46 : 10. ^c3 : 160; 4 : 17 : 66; 26 : 218.

3075. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3075A. Commentary :

In deference to his very exalted spiritual rank the Holy Prophet has been addressed as *النبي* (the Prophet) in the present verse and at several other places in the Qur'ān. No other Prophet in any revealed Scripture or in the Qur'ān has been addressed as such. All the Prophets have been addressed by their proper names. This peculiarity of address for the Holy Prophet has been adopted to show that he alone is *النبي* i.e., *the Prophet par excellence*. Or the reference in this form of address may be to a Biblical prophecy in which the advent of "that Prophet" has been foretold. The prophecy clearly and definitely applies only to the Holy Prophet.

Incidentally, according to Quranic idiom the

word *النبي* (the Prophet) implies also the followers of the Holy Prophet.

3076. Commentary :

In v. 2 above the Holy Prophet and his disciples were exhorted to take God as a means of protection. In this verse they have been enjoined to put their complete trust in Him alone. This insistence about reliance on Divine help and protection implied that very hard days were ahead of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims and, by this exhortation to rely on God, they were being mentally prepared for them. As the verses that follow show, the present *Sūra* was revealed at a most critical period in the Holy Prophet's eventful career. The whole of Arabia had risen like one man against Islam. Besides, a most unscrupulous campaign of slander and calumny had also been let loose against him by the "Hypocrites" and Jews of Medina. Those indeed were very difficult days for Islam.

5. Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his breast; nor has He made those of your wives from whom you keep away by calling them mothers, your *real* mothers, nor has He made your adopted sons your *real* sons. These are *merely* the words of your mouths; but Allah speaks the truth, and He guides to the *right* path.³⁰⁷⁷

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهِ وَمَا جَعَلَ
أَزْوَاجَكُمْ اِلٰى تَظْهَرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ اُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ
اَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ اَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ
يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيْلَ ۝

3077. Important Words :

تظاهرون (keep away by calling them mothers).
ظاهر من امرأته means, he separated from his
wife, calling her his mother. مظهارة and ظهار
are infinitive nouns from this root (Lane &
Aqrab).

ادعياءكم (your adopted sons). ادعياء is the
plural of ادعى (da'iyyun) which is derived from
دعا which means, he called. ادعاه means, he
made him to assert his relationship as a son.
ادعى الى غير ابيه means, he claimed as his father
one who was not his father. ادعى means one
invited to a repast; one who is claimed as a
son by a person who is not his father; adopted
son; one whose origin or lineage or parentage
is doubted; a bastard (one who attributes his
descent to other than his father) (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse seeks to abolish two very deep-seated
and wide-spread customs of the Arabs in the
Holy Prophet's time. The more obnoxious of
these two was that of *Zihār*. A husband, in a
fit of anger, would call his wife his mother. The
poor woman was deprived of her conjugal

rights and yet remained tied to him without
the right of marrying another man. Islam, a
great champion of women's rights, could not
tolerate such a savage custom. The other
custom was that of adopting the son of another
man as one's own. This custom, apart from
being calculated to cause complications in
blood relationships was also puerile and foolish.
The reason for the abolition of both these cus-
toms is implied in the words, "Allah has not
made for any man two hearts in his breast."
Human heart is understood to be the seat of
emotions and feelings. It can entertain only
one kind of emotion at one time. Contradic-
tory emotions cannot possibly be entertained by
it at the same time. Moreover, different human
relations evoke different emotions. Hence
merely calling one's wife one's mother or calling
a stranger one's son cannot evoke the corres-
ponding emotions in one's heart. A wife can
never become a mother nor a stranger a real son.
Mere words of mouth cannot change the state
of mind of the utterer of those words, nor can
they alter hard facts of physical relationship. So
it is foolish on the part of a person to call
one's wife one's mother or to call another a
son who is not one's real son.

6. Call them by *the names of* their fathers. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah. But if you know not their fathers, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends. And there is no blame on you *in respect of* any mistake you may unintentionally make in this *matter*; but *you will be called to account for* that which your hearts intend. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.³⁰⁷⁸

7. The Prophet is nearer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are *as* mothers to them. ^aAnd blood-relations are nearer to one another, according to the Book of Allah, than *the rest of* the believers *from among the Helpers* as well as the Emigrants, except that you show kindness to your friends. This *also* is written down in the Book.³⁰⁷⁹

أَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ⑥

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ⑦

48 : 76.

3078. Commentary :

The words "in faith" qualify both "your brethren" and "your friends" and the clause would read as "they are your brethren and friends in faith."

3079. Commentary :

This verse clears a possible ambiguity that might have arisen from misunderstanding the injunction contained in v. 6 above. While in that verse the believers were enjoined to "call them by the names of their fathers," in the present verse the Holy Prophet by implication has been called the father of the Faithful. In fact, the preceding verse speaks of blood-relationship and the verse under comment speaks of the spiritual relationship that subsists between the

Holy Prophet and the Faithful. It purports to say that in his capacity as their spiritual father, the Holy Prophet stands closer to them than even their own selves and that his wives being their spiritual mothers ought to be treated by them with greater regard and respect than the mothers who gave them birth, because spiritual relationship stands on a much higher plane than physical relationship. It is to this supreme reality that the Holy Prophet has drawn attention in a well-known saying of his, *viz.*, "the faith of a believer does not become perfect unless the love he bears to me transcends all worldly connections and relationships" (Bukhārī, *kutāb al-Īmān*).

The verse removes another possible misunderstanding. The Islamic brotherhood which had

8. And *remember* "when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from thee, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary; and We *indeed* took from them a solemn covenant";³⁰⁸⁰

وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ
تُوحٍ وَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيسٰى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ
وََاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ۝

9. That He may question the truthful about their truthfulness. ^bAnd for the disbelievers He has prepared a painful punishment.³⁰⁸¹

لَيْسَ لِّلصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ وَاَعَدَّ لِّلْكَافِرِيْنَ
عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝

^a3 : 82. ^b18 : 103; 48 : 14; 76 : 5.

come into being through the spiritual fatherhood of the Holy Prophet might have led to the misconception that Muslims could inherit each other's property. It is this misconception that the verse under comment seeks to remove. It purports to say that (1) only blood-relations can inherit each other and (2) that from among the blood-relations only the believers can inherit, the disbelievers having been debarred from inheriting their believing relatives.

The verse also abolished that form of brotherhood which was established between the Emigrants of Mecca and the Helpers of Medina, on the former's arrival in Medina, according to which a مهاجر (Emigrant) would even inherit the property left by an انصاري (Helper). After this verse was revealed that form of brotherhood which was but a temporary measure, adopted to rehabilitate the Emigrants from Mecca, ceased to exist, and blood relationship and not faith alone, became the decisive factor in determining inheritance and other kindred matters. But the wider brotherhood of Islam continued and Muslims were expected to treat one another like brothers.

3080. **Commentary :**

The four Prophets—Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, have found special mention in this verse inasmuch as they occupy a very eminent and exalted position among the hierarchy of pre-Islamic Divine Prophets. Noah was the first Law-bearing Prophet in the real sense of the word and in Abraham converged both the Mosaic and Islamic Dispensations, and Moses was the Holy Prophet's counterpart while Jesus was the last of the Israelite Prophets and the Holy Prophet's harbinger. The words "their covenant" mean the covenant which was taken from them or which befitted their dignity and exalted position and was in harmony with their high duties and responsibilities. See also 3 : 82.

3081. **Commentary :**

The verse signifies that without the revelation of a Divine Law, man could not be held responsible for his actions.

2. 2 10. O ye who believe, remember the favour of Allah upon you when there came against you hosts, and We sent against them a wind and hosts that you saw not. And Allah sees what you do.³⁰⁸²

11. When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when *your* eyes became distracted, and *your* hearts reached to the throats, and you thought *diverse* thoughts about Allah.³⁰⁸³

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ
جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ۝١٠

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ
زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ
بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا ۝١١

3082. Commentary :

With this verse begins an account of the Battle of the Ditch. This battle which took place in the 5th year of the Hijra was the fiercest encounter in which the Muslims had so far been engaged. The whole of Arabia rose like one man against Islam. The 'Quraish of Mecca, their allies, the Ghatfān, the Ashja' and Murrah, the Farārah, the Sulaim and the Banū Sa'd and Banū Asad, the desert tribes of Central Arabia, aided and abetted by the perfidious Jews and treacherous "Hypocrites" of Medina formed themselves into a grand confederacy against the Holy Prophet. A mighty force numbering from ten to twenty thousand strong was pitched against 1200 (according to some writers 3000 Muslims, including women and children, were employed in digging the Ditch) ill-prepared and ill-provisioned Muslims. The siege of Medina lasted from fifteen days to four weeks, according to different versions after which the forces of darkness melted away without inflicting any serious loss upon the Muslims. Islam emerged stronger from this severe ordeal and the

disbelieving Quraish were never again able to march against Muslims in force.

The reference in the word رِيحًا (wind) is to the strong cold wind which blew upon the confederated hosts and uprooted their tents and extinguished their fires. Says William Muir:

Forage was obtained with the utmost difficulty; provisions were running short, and the camels and horses dying daily in great numbers; wearied and damped in spirit, the night set in upon them, cold and tempestuous wind and rain beat mercilessly on the unprotected camp. The storm rose to a hurricane. Fires were extinguished, tents blown down, cooking vessels and other equipage overthrown ("Life of Muḥammad").

The words "and hosts that you saw not" refer to the forces of nature—wind, rain and cold which wearied the disbelievers and damped their spirits. It may also refer to the hosts of angels which cast fear in the hearts of disbelievers and heartened and encouraged the Muslims.

3083. Commentary :

The verse constitutes a very revealing commentary on the mightiness of the forces of disbelief and the most desperate state in

12. There *and then* were the believers *sorely* tried, "and they were shaken with a violent shaking.

13. ^bAnd when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said, 'Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion.'

14. And when a party of them said, 'O people of Yathrib, you have *possibly* no stand *against the enemy*, therefore turn back.' And a section of them *even* asked leave of the Prophet, saying, 'Our houses are exposed *and defenceless*.' And they were *in truth* not exposed. They only sought to flee away.³⁰⁸⁴

هَذَاكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زَلَالًا شَدِيدًا ۝١٢

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ

مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۝١٣

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ

لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ

إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِن يُرِيدُونَ

الْإِفْرَارَ ۝١٤

^a8: 18.

^b8: 50.

which Muslims were then placed. The disbelievers burst upon Medina from every direction.

The words, "from above you and from below you" mean, from the heights of Medina as well as from the plains.

The reference in the words "and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah," is to the "Hypocrites" and the weak of faith among the Muslims. V. 13 makes it quite clear that the reference in the above words is only to these two.

3084. Important Words :

عورة (exposed) is derived from عور and means, part between the navel and knee, pudenda; every part of the body which a person covers; defenceless or exposed; disgrace; any place of concealment; a cleft or fissure in a mountain; a woman; a time in which it is not proper for a woman to appear in public, as at or before day-

break, nightfall, and mid-day; vice: weakness; blindness of one eye (Lane & Aqrab). See also 24 : 32.

يثرِب is derived from يثرب. They say ثربه i.e. he rebuked or reproached him and showed him to be foul; he stripped him of his garment (Aqrab). يثرب (which now is known as مدينة النبي i.e. the City of the Prophet) was so called perhaps because the place was malaria-stricken or because the Medinites being cultivators and having been given to farming were looked down upon by the warlike Arabs. See also 12 : 93.

Commentary :

The reference in the word طائفة (party) is to the "Hypocrites" of Medina. Weakness of faith causes hypocrisy and *vice versa*.

The expression, "therefore turn back," may mean, return to your old faith, or (2) go back to your homes.

15. And if entry were effected, against them *into the town* from its environs, and then they were asked to join in the disturbance, they would have *at once* done so, and would not have tarried in their houses save a little.³⁰⁸⁵

16. And truly they had already covenanted with Allah *that* they would not turn their backs. And a covenant with Allah will have to be answered for.³⁰⁸⁶

17. Say, "Flight shall not avail you if you flee from death or slaughter; and *even* then you will enjoy but little."

18. Say, ^b"Who is it that can save you against Allah if it be His wish to do you harm or if it be His wish to show you mercy?" And they will not find for themselves any friend or helper other than Allah.

وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ
لَاتَوَّهَآ وَمَا تَلَبَّتُوْا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيْرًا ۝١٥

وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُؤَلُّوْنَ
الْأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللّٰهِ مَسْئُوْلًا ۝١٦

قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ اِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ اَوْ
الْقَتْلِ وَاِذَا لَا تُشْعُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝١٧

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِيْكُمْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ
سُوْءًا اَوْ اَسْرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ؕ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيْرًا ۝١٨

^a4 : 79; 62 : 9. ^b39 : 39.

3085. Commentary :

The present verse unmasks the falsity of excuses of the "Hypocrites" mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., that their houses were exposed and defenceless and, therefore, they were unable to take part in the fighting on the side of Muslims. It purports to say that if an enemy had entered into Medina from another direction and they were invited to make common cause with him against the Muslims, they would have willingly and readily done so. It is because they have been asked in fulfilment of their solemn pledges to fight for Muslims against disbelievers that they advance the lame excuse of their houses being defenceless.

3086. Commentary :

The words, "they had already covenanted with Allah," refer to the treaty that the Jews of Medina had made with the Holy Prophet that they would fight on his side against any enemy who invaded Medina. The verse holds out a solemn warning to these breakers of their plight-ed word that they will have to account for their treachery. The exact words of the above-mentioned treaty were :

و ان بينهم النصر على من دهم يثرب
i.e. "and they take upon themselves to help the Holy Prophet against anyone who should attack Yathrib" (Khātām al-Nabiyyīn, Part II, by Mirzā Bashīr Aḥmad).

19. Verily, Allah knows those among you who hinder *men* and those who say to their brethren, 'Come to us;' and they come not to the fight but a little,³⁰⁸⁷

قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَائِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَأْسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝١٩

20. Being niggardly with regard to you. But when danger comes, thou seest them looking towards thee, their eyes rolling like one who is fainting on account of death. But when the fear has passed away, they assail you with sharp tongues "being greedy for wealth. These have never believed; so Allah has rendered their works null and void. And that is an easy thing for Allah."³⁰⁸⁸

أَشْحَةً عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ سَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۖ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِأَلْسِنَةٍ حِدَادٍ أَشْحَةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۖ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ۝٢٠

٢٢٢ : ١٢ ; ٧٠ : ٢١-٢٢.

3087. Commentary :

The expression "they come not to the fight but a little," may mean, (a) very few of them take the field on the side of the Muslims; (b) they withdraw after having gone a short distance towards the field of battle, *i.e.* they take little or no part in the fighting.

3088. Important Words :

أَشْحَةً (being niggardly) is the plural of شح which is derived from شح. They say شح بالشئ *i.e.* he was or became avaricious and niggardly with regard to the thing. تشاحوا على الشئ means, everyone of them tried to get the thing in preference to others. شح means, niggardliness, avarice. شح means, niggardly or stingy, or niggardly in the utmost degree; and excessively or culpably desirous or avaricious or covetous (Aqrab & Lane).

سَلَقَهُ بِالرَّمَحِ (they assail you). They say *i.e.*, he pierced him with the lance. سَلَقَهُ بِالْكَلَامِ means, he smote him or taunted him with speech. سَلَقَهُ بِالسَّوْطِ means, he beat him with the whip till his skin became flayed. سَلَقَ الْبَرْدُ النَّبَاتَ means, cold burned the herbage (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

As shown under "Important Words" the word شح possesses the sense of both niggardliness and greed. Both these senses have been expressed in the words أَشْحَةً عَلَيْكُمْ used twice in the verse under comment. In the former place the expression means that the "Hypocrites" are very niggardly in giving help to the Muslims and in the latter the same expression means that they are very greedy of getting money and taunt the Muslims if their greed is not satisfied. In fact, niggardliness or miserliness and greediness are two

21. They think that the Confederates have not gone away; and if the Confederates should come *again*, they would wish to be among the nomad Arabs in the desert, asking for news about you. And if they were among you, they would fight but little.³⁰⁸⁹

يَحْسِبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ
وَذُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بِأَدْوَانَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ
نَبَأِكُمْ وَلَوْ كَانَؤَا فِيكُمْ مَا قَاتَلُوا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝٢١

R. 3 22. Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah "an excellent model for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much."³⁰⁹⁰

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ
رُجُو اللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۝٢٢

43 : 32.

facets of the same bad quality. A miser must also be greedy. A person is miser in so far as the giving of anything by him to another person is concerned and he is greedy in so far as the taking of something from someone else is concerned.

3089. Commentary :

With 13th verse the description had begun of an hypocrite's state of mind, particularly when he is face to face with danger. The picture has become complete with the present verse. The hypocrite is a coward and a defeatist. He is a liar and has no regard for pledges solemnly made. He is treacherous, disloyal and perfidious. He is niggardly and greedy. In short he is the complete antithesis of a true believer.

3090. Commentary :

The Battle of the Ditch perhaps constituted the hardest ordeal in the Holy Prophet's whole career and from that supreme test he emerged with enhanced moral stature and prestige. In fact, it is in time of danger, when all around is dark, or in the hour of success and victory when a person's enemy lies prostrate at his feet, that his real mettle is tested, and history bears an eloquent testimony to the fact

that the Holy Prophet was as great and noble in time of distress, as he was in the hour of success. The battles of the Ditch, Uḥad and Ḥunain shed a flood of light on one beautiful facet of his character, and the Fall of Mecca on the other. Peril and danger did not discourage or dismay him nor could victory and success spoil him. When left almost alone on the day of Ḥunain with the fate of Islam hanging in the balance, he fearlessly and single-handed advanced into the enemy's ranks with the memorable word: on his lips, viz., انا النبي لا كذب انا ابن عبدالمطلب i.e. "I am the Prophet of God and I am telling no lie. I am the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib." And when Mecca fell and the whole of Arabia lay prostrate at his feet, absolute and undisputed power failed to corrupt him. Says Rev Bosworth Smith :

Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to glut his revenge. Read the account of the entry of Muḥammad into Mecca side by side with that of Marius or Sulla into Rome. Compare all the attendant circumstances, the outrages that preceded, and the use made by each of his recovered power and we shall then be in a position better to

appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription lists, no plunder, no wanton revenge. From a helpless orphan to the ruler of a big country was a great transition; yet the Holy Prophet retained the nobility of his character under all circumstances ("Muḥammad and Muhammadanism").

What greater testimony could there possibly be to the Holy Prophet's nobility of character than the fact that those who were nearest to him and knew him most, loved him most and were the first to believe in his mission—his dear wife Khadīja, his life-long friend Abū Bakr, his cousin and son-in-law 'Alī, his freed slave Zaid. The Prophet was humanity's noblest specimen and a perfect model in beauty and beneficence. In all the various facets of his variegated life and character he stands unrivalled and an excellent exemplar for men to copy and follow. His whole life lies before the floodlight of history. He started life as an orphaned child and ended with being the arbiter of the destinies of a whole nation. As a boy he was sedate and dignified and at the threshold of youth he was a perfect example of moral virtue, righteousness and sobriety. In middle age he won the title of Al-Amin, *i.e.*, the trusty and truthful, and as a business man he proved himself to be most honest and scrupulous. He married ladies both much older and much younger than himself and all of them swore by his faithfulness, love, and godliness. As a father he was most affectionate, and as a friend most loyal and considerate. When entrusted with the great and difficult task of reforming a corrupt society and subjected to persecution and exile, he bore it all with dignity and decorum. He fought as a soldier, and commanded armies. He faced defeat and won victories. He legislated and decided cases. He

was a politician, a statesman, a teacher and a leader of men. Head of the state as well as of the Church he was, as a great writer has described him, Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right Divine, it was Muḥammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. He would do his household work with his own hands, would sleep upon a leathern mat and his menu consisted of dates and water or barley-bread, and after having done a full day of multifarious duties, he would spend the hours of night in prayer and supplication till his feet got swollen. No man under so vastly changed circumstances and conditions had changed so little. To quote Rev. B. Smith again :

On the whole, the wonder is not how much but how little, under different circumstances, Muḥammad differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them.

Such was Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam whom the verse under comment describes as an excellent exemplar and a perfect model and as humanity's unerring guide for all time. The Holy Prophet's goodness and greatness indeed stand unrivalled and unmatched, incomparable and unapproachable.

23. And when the believers saw the Confederates, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us; and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth.' And it only added to their faith and submission.³⁰⁹¹

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ
إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

24. Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they had made with Allah. There are some among them who have fulfilled their vow, and there are others among them who *still* wait, and they have not changed *their condition* in the least;³⁰⁹²

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۚ وَمَا
بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

3091. Commentary :

This verse shows that whereas the "Hypocrites" and the weak of faith as mentioned in the preceding verses were greatly disheartened and dismayed by the very difficult situation in which Islam was placed at the time of the Battle of the Ditch, the faith of the sincere and true Muslims became stronger since they found that what the Holy Prophet had foretold, had come out true. The history of Islam bears ample testimony to the fact that the more difficult and critical the situation that confronted the Muslims, the greater their resolve and the will to fight, and greater their confidence and trust in God. They always rose equal to the occasion.

The reference in the words, "This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us," is to the prophecy about the defeat and discomfiture of the hosts of disbelief and the victory of Islam (38 : 12 & 54 : 46).

3092. Important Words :

نَحْبُهُ (his vow). نَحْب (nahbun) is derived from

نَحَب (nahaba). They say نَحَبَ الرَّجُلُ i.e. the man vowed ; he put himself under an obligation to do a thing ; he laid a bet or wager. نَحْب (nahbun) means, a vow, or a great vow; a great bet, a wager ; an important matter; a great danger; death; the soul; sleep; violence; fatness; ambition; avarice ; purpose; a game of chance. They say قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ i.e. he died; he fulfilled his obligation; he redeemed or fulfilled his pledge or vow; he was slain in the way of God (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse constitutes a great memorial to the fidelity, sincerity and steadfastness in faith of the Holy Prophet's disciples. Never did the followers of a Prophet receive from God such certificate of good conduct and faithfulness. Just as the Master was unique among all Divine Messengers in discharging his prophetic duties, so were his Companions matchless in fulfilling the role assigned to them.

25. That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth, "and punish the hypocrites if He so please, or turn to them in mercy. Verily, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا ۝٣٥

26. And Allah turned back the disbelievers in their rage; they gained no good. And Allah sufficed the believers in their fight. Allah is Powerful, Mighty.³⁰⁹³

وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا
وَكَفَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا
عَزِيزًا ۝٣٦

27. And He brought those of the People of the Book who aided them down ^bfrom their fortresses, and cast terror into their hearts. Some you slew, and some you took captive.³⁰⁹⁴

وَأَنزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ
صِيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فََرِيقًا
تَقْتُلُونَ وَنَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا ۝٣٧

^a48 : 7.

^b59 : 3.

3093. Commentary :

Allah repelled the attack of the Confederates. They had to raise the siege and, consumed by anger and rage at having completely failed in their unholy undertaking, they went back to their homes, never being in a position again to attack Medina. Henceforward the initiative passed into the hands of Muslims. The Battle of the Ditch marked a turning point in the history of Islam. From a weak and continuously harassed and harried minority Islam became a mighty force in Arabia.

3094. Commentary :

The reference in the verse is to the tragic fate of the perfidious Banū Quraizah. They had

entered into a solemn treaty with the Holy Prophet that they would aid and help Muslims if an enemy attacked Medina. But at the time of the Battle of the Ditch they were prevailed upon by Huyayy, the leader of the Banū Nadīr to break their plighted word with the Holy Prophet and join the grand confederacy against Islam. When the attack of the confederated hosts fizzled out, the Holy Prophet marched against them, and besieged them in their strongholds. The siege continued for about 25 days after which they agreed to lay down their arms and preferred to submit to the award of Sa'd bin Ma'adh, the chief of the tribe of Aus, rather than to that of the Holy Prophet. Sa'd decided the case according to the Mosaic Law (Deut. 20:10-15), viz., that combatants be put to the sword and

28. And He made you inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and a land on which you have not yet set foot. And Allah has power over all things.³⁰⁹⁵

أَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَبِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا
لَمْ تَطُورُهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ۝٢٨

2.4 29. O Prophet! say to thy wives, 'If you desire the life of this world, and its adornment, come then, I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner.'³⁰⁹⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ
الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ
سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ۝٢٩

non-combatants taken prisoner. According to different accounts from 300 to 700 persons were put to the sword. The award of Sa'd may seem a little severe but it was of the Banū Quraizah's own seeking and choice and the Holy Prophet had nothing to do with it, except that he was in honour bound to get it executed. Moreover, the award was quite in harmony with the laws of civilized warfare and was a fit and fully deserved punishment for their brazen-faced treachery and perfidy.

3095. Commentary :

Besides mentioning that God caused Muslims to inherit the lands and fortresses of the Banū Quraizah which was a fit punishment for their treacherous conduct, the verse under comment embodied a grand prophecy that yet more lands would fall into the hands of Muslims, the allusion being either to the lands of Khaibar or to the eventual conquest of Persian and Roman Empires and of the countries beyond, upon which Muslims had not so far set their feet. The prophecy may also be taken as applying to the conquest of Mecca.

3096. Commentary :

As a result of the Battle of the Ditch and of the subsequent banishment of the Banū Quraizah,

large booty fell into the hands of Muslims. They were also promised more conquests and wealth (see v. 28 above). From a persecuted and economically very poor minority they had grown into a rich, powerful and prosperous community. Material wealth, however, brings in its train worldly-mindedness, and a desire for ease and comfort and a disinclination to render acts of service and sacrifice. This is a state of affairs which a Reformer has especially to guard against. As love of ease and comfort, generally makes its appearance first in the domestic circle, and as the members of the Holy Prophet's household were to serve as a model in social behaviour, it was in the fitness of things that they should have been required to set an example in self-denial. Not that the use of money was altogether taboo or that amenities of life were completely forbidden to them, but they were, no doubt, expected to set a very high standard of self-abnegation. It is to this high standard of the sacrifice of material benefits and of an affluent and easy living, to which the present and the following few verses refer. The companionship of the Holy Prophet demanded this sacrifice, and his wives were told to make a choice between comfortable life

30. 'But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter, then truly Allah has prepared for those of you who do good, a great reward;'

وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالْآخِرَةَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝۳۰

31. O wives of the Prophet! if any of you be guilty of anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude, the punishment will be doubled for her. And that is easy for Allah.³⁰⁹⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا النِّسَاءُ الشَّرِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُمْ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ
يُضَعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۖ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى

اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ۝۳۱

and his companionship, and it should be said to their credit that they chose the latter alternative and that even when, afterwards, in the time of the Caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthmān, very high stipends were paid to them, they lived extremely simple lives and spent most of the money in charity.

The words, "I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner" imply that the Holy Prophet's wives were allowed a free choice and if anyone of them had elected to part company with him, it would have entailed no displeasure of God, on the contrary she would have been handsomely provided.

It may also be noted that just as the Holy Prophet was a perfect exemplar for all sections of humanity, his wives were expected to serve as model for women in their special sphere. This is why they have been called "the Mothers of the Faithful." Naturally, a very strict and high standard of self-discipline and self-denial is demanded of them in this and the next few verses.

3097. Important Words :

فاحشة (anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude) being derived from *فحش* means, an excess or anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude ; or a thing excessively evil; anything forbidden by God, unseemly conduct ; also avarice or niggardliness in the payment of *Zakāt* (Aqrah). See also 2 : 170 & 4 : 16.

Commentary :

The words "the punishment would be doubled to her" signify, that if they hankered after physical comforts, which in reality is the significance of the word *فاحشة* used in the verse, they would be setting a very bad example, and as wives of the Holy Prophet whose example was bound to be followed by other women they would be incurring a grave responsibility and would, therefore, deserve double punishment. On the other hand, if they were devoted to God and His Messenger and had set a noble example for others to copy, their reward would also be double.

32. But whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger and does good works, We shall give her her reward twice over; and We have prepared for her an honourable provision.³⁰⁹⁸

33. O wives of the Prophet! you are not like any *other* women if you are righteous. So be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should feel tempted; and speak a decent speech.³⁰⁹⁹

34. And stay in your houses with dignity, and do not show off yourselves like the showing off of the former days of ignorance, and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakāt, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely, Allah desires to remove from you all uncleanness, O Members of the Household, and purify you completely.³¹⁰⁰

وَمَنْ يَقْنُتْ مِنْكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا
نُؤْتِيهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ
فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْعَمَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ
وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٣﴾

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
الْأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ
الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

419 : 56; 20 : 133.

3098. Commentary :

The masculine gender of the verb *يقنت* is used because of the subject *من* which is invariably followed by a verb in the masculine gender.

3099. Commentary :

The wives of the Holy Prophet are here enjoined to preserve the dignity of their very exalted position and to conduct themselves with due propriety and decorum while talking to members of the opposite sex.

By implication all Muslim women are included in this injunction. They are expected to be kind and gentle in speech but their gentleness should not be misunderstood by any evilly-inclined person for pliancy and softness.

3100. Important Words :

رجس (uncleanness) is derived from *رجس* (*rajasa*) which means, it was or became dirty or filthy or unclean or hated; he did a bad or evil action. *رجس* (*rijsun*) means, dirt or filth; a dirty or filthy thing; a thing or action disliked for its filthiness; a sin; an action that leads to punishment; doubt; infidelity; suggestion of the devil (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 91.

Commentary :

The words "stay in your houses" show that the principal sphere of the activities of a woman is her house—not that she is not allowed to leave its four walls. She may go out as many times as she may require for the performance of a legitimate errand or the satisfaction of a legitimate

35. And remember what is rehearsed in your houses of the Signs of Allah and of wisdom. Verily, Allah is the Knower of subtleties, All-Aware.³¹⁰¹

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ۝

need. But to move about in mixed society and take part in all sorts of avocations and professions, shoulder to shoulder with man, and to do so to the neglect and detriment of her special domestic duties as the mistress of the house is not the Islamic conception of ideal womanhood. The Holy Prophet's wives were particularly required to "stay in their houses" because the dignity of their exalted position as "Mothers of the Faithful" demanded this and also because Muslims often visited them to pay their respects and sought necessary information and guidance from them on all important religious matters.

The commandment seems to apply only to the wives of the Holy Prophet but it equally applies to all Muslim women. It is the Quranic way of address that while it appears to be particularly addressing the Holy Prophet, the address is meant equally for all Muslims. Similarly, a

commandment addressed to the wives of the Holy Prophet applies also to all Muslim women.

The expression *اهل البيت* applies principally and primarily to the Holy Prophet's wives. This is quite clear from the context and also from vv. 11 : 74 and 28 : 13. In its wider sense, however, it includes all members of a family who form one's household, even one's children and children's children. The expression had also been used by the Holy Prophet for some of his select Companions. *سلمان منا اهل البيت* i.e. "Salmān is member of our household" (Ṣaghīr), is a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet.

3101. **Commentary :**

The Holy Prophet's noble consorts were required not only to serve as model of virtue, piety and righteousness for the Faithful but to teach them the principles and precepts of Islam which they had learnt direct from the Prophet.

٢. 5 36. "Surely, men who submit themselves *to God* and women who submit themselves *to Him*, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast *in their faith* and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember *Him*—Allah has prepared for *all of* them forgiveness and a great reward.³¹⁰²

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَ
الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ
وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٦﴾

٩٩ : 112.

3102. Commentary :

This verse embodies a most effective repudiation of the charge that Christian missionaries and publicists are in the habit of levelling at Islam, viz., that it accords a lower status to women. The Qur'ān has repeatedly said that Muslim women stand on the same level with Muslim men, and that they can attain to all those spiritual heights to which men can attain. Besides, Islam confers on women all the political and social rights which men enjoy. Only their spheres of activities being different, their duties are different. It is this difference in duties of both the sexes that has been mistakenly, or perhaps deliberately, misunderstood by hostile critics of Islam as implying a lower status for women.

The ten outstanding attributes of Muslim men and women mentioned in this verse have been appropriately described in an ascending order.

The first stage of the spiritual development of a believer is that of *إسلام* which in this verse

has been used in the sense of intellectual acceptance of truth. The next stage is that of *إيمان* which implies the giving of peace and safety to others and testifying to the Divinely-revealed Teaching. At the stage of *إسلام* a Muslim accepts truth because reason and common sense demand of him this acceptance, while at the stage of *إيمان* he combines emotions and feelings with reason; and becomes intellectually and emotionally a true believer. The third stage of spiritual development is that of *قنوت* which signifies total obedience to God's commandments. At this stage the spiritual way-farer finds himself irresistibly attracted towards his Creator, and his submission to Divine commandments proceeds from his love for the Supreme Being. The next stage in the spiritual journey is reached when a believer becomes *صادق* which means that he identifies himself completely with truth, and faces trials and temptations with complete equanimity. His faith becomes pure and free from all dross of hypocrisy and love of worldly things. The

37. And it behoves not a believing man or a believing woman, "when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that there should be a choice for them in the matter concerning them. And whoso disobeys Allah and His Messenger, surely strays away in manifest error."³¹⁰³

وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَخْتَارُوا إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ﴿٣٧﴾

4 : 66.

fifth stage is that of صبر; when identification with truth becomes a permanent feature of a believer's character. The stage of خشوع is a still higher stage in spiritual progress. It indicates an attitude of humility which the believer develops after he has gained complete victory over trials and tribulations consequent upon the growing consciousness of his own weakness and that of the perfection and completeness of the Divine Being. The next stage is that of متصدق. At this stage the believer becomes conscious that he is not to live for himself alone but should share God-given blessings with other fellow-beings. At the stage of صائم which is the next high spiritual stage the believer learns to sacrifice his own legitimate needs and comforts for the benefit of others and at the ninth stage of حافظين فروجهم he scrupulously guards all the avenues through which sin can find access to his mind. At the tenth stage i.e. الذاكرين الله, which is the last stage and which forms the climax of spiritual growth and development, the believer is so completely engrossed in God as to have become lost in His remembrance.

3103. Commentary :

The verse under comment continues the general theme of the preceding verses, viz., that believers should try as far as possible, to subordinate their own desires to the desire of the Holy Prophet and when he has given his decision regarding an affair, they should accept it unhesitatingly without the least mental reservation. The immediate occasion for the revelation of this verse may have been Zainab's hesitation to comply with the Holy Prophet's greatly cherished wish that she should marry Zaid, his freed slave. It goes to Zainab's credit that in deference to the Prophet's wish she agreed to her marriage with Zaid, much against her personal inclination. Zainab's marriage with Zaid and their subsequent separation has been dealt with in some detail in the next verse. It is, however, wrong to assume, as some Commentators have mistakenly assumed, that the Holy Prophet pressed and compelled Zainab against her will to accept Zaid as her husband. It being inconsistent with Islamic teaching, the Holy Prophet could not have done this. Zainab only deferred to the wish of the Holy Prophet.

38. And *remember* when thou didst say to him on whom Allah had bestowed favours and on whom thou *also* hadst bestowed favours: 'Keep thy wife to thyself, and fear Allah.' And thou didst conceal in thy heart what Allah was going to bring to light, and thou wast afraid of the people, whereas Allah has better right that thou shouldst fear Him. Then, when Zaid had accomplished his want of her *so as to have no further need of her*, We joined her in marriage to thee, so that there may be no hindrance for the believers with regard to *marriage with* the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them *and have divorced them*. And Allah's decree must be fulfilled.³¹⁰⁴

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ
أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ
مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ
تَخْشَاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاهَا لَكَ
لَا يَكُونُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ
إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ۝۳۸

3104. Important Words :

وطرا (want) has no verb. It means, a want, a need, an object of want or need; or that which one proposes to accomplish or of which one is desirous. They say قضى منه وطره *i.e.* he accomplished or obtained his want from him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As the verse deals with an incident of very great historical importance, it demands and deserves a somewhat detailed explanation. Zaid bin Hārith, to whom the words "on whom Allah had bestowed favours and on whom thou also had bestowed favours" refer, belonged to the tribe of Kalb. In his childhood he was kidnapped and sold as a slave in Mecca where he was bought by Khadījah's brother and given over to her. On her marriage with the Holy Prophet Khadījah presented Zaid to him who at once emancipated him. Zaid was so much attached to the Prophet that when later his father and uncle begged of the Holy Prophet to let him

go with them as the grief of his separation from home had almost killed his mother, the Prophet readily gave his permission. But Zaid himself flatly refused to part company with the Holy Prophet, exclaiming that he was dearer to him than his father and mother. The Prophet was so deeply touched by Zaid's fidelity and love for him that he at once declared him (Zaid) to be his son and henceforward Zaid came to be known as the Prophet's son. Zaid remained throughout his life a most beloved and faithful disciple of the Holy Prophet and sealed his fidelity to Islam and the Prophet with his blood on the battle-field of Mūta.

Zainab was the daughter of the Holy Prophet's aunt, hence a full-blooded Arab, intensely proud of her ancestry and exalted social status. Islam had envisaged and given to the world a civilization and culture in which there were to be no class divisions, no hereditary nobility, no vested interests. All men were to be free and equal in the sight of God. The Holy Prophet wanted to start with his own family the carrying

into actual effect of this noble ideal of Islam. He wished to marry Zainab to Zaid, who in spite of having been liberated by the Prophet and called his son, unfortunately still carried the stigma of slavery in the minds of some people. It was exactly this stigma of slavery, this invidious distinction between 'free' and 'slave' which the Holy Prophet sought to remove by Zainab's marriage with Zaid. In deference to the Holy Prophet's wish Zainab agreed to the proposal. The purpose of the Holy Prophet was achieved. The marriage levelled to the ground all class distinctions and divisions. It was a practical demonstration of Islam's noble ideal. The marriage, however, ended in failure, not so much due to a difference in the social status of Zainab and Zaid as to the incompatibility of their dispositions and temperaments and also due to a feeling of inferiority from which Zaid suffered. The failure of the marriage naturally grieved the Holy Prophet. But it also served a very useful purpose. In pursuance of Divine command, as mentioned in the latter part of the verse under comment, the Prophet himself married Zainab, thus cutting at the very root of another obnoxious and deep-seated Arab custom, viz., that it was a sacrilege to marry the wife of one's adopted son. The custom of adoption was abolished and with it went also this foolish notion. Thus Zainab's marriage with Zaid served one [very noble object and its failure another highly useful purpose.

The words "fear Allah" signify that Zaid wanted to divorce Zainab, and as divorce according to Islam is very hateful in the sight of God, the Holy Prophet exhorted him not to do so.

The clause, "And then.....thou shouldst fear Him," may apply to both Zaid and the Holy

Prophet. Applying to Zaid it would mean that Zaid did not like that the cause of his separation from Zainab should come to light, perhaps because as the words "fear Allah," indicate the fault lay more with him than with Zainab. As, however, applying to the Holy Prophet, the words would signify that as the marriage between Zaid and Zainab was arranged at his instance and wish, he naturally did not like its breaking. The clause also shows that the Prophet feared that the break-down of the marriage which was arranged by him and which had been entered into in deference to his special wish, but which resulted in an ostensible failure of the experiment in Islamic brotherhood, would cause some mental confusion and uneasiness among people whose faith was weak. This was the anxiety that lay heavy on the Prophet's heart. The words, "thou didst fear men," seem to point to this fear of his. But, as mentioned above, God had His own purpose in the failure of this marriage. He wanted to show that there was nothing in this failure to be afraid of. On the contrary, it was a blessing in disguise and was intended to serve a great purpose and therefore the Prophet's fear was unfounded.

Christian and other hostile critics of Islam pretend to find in the Holy Prophet's marriage with Zainab a basis for mean attacks on him. It is stated that the Prophet, having by chance seen Zainab, became enamoured of her beauty and Zaid, having come to know of his desire to marry her, sought divorce from her. The fact that the Holy Prophet's most inveterate enemies, before whose eyes the whole affair had actually taken place, dared not attribute the base motives ascribed to him by these critics after so many centuries, completely knocks the bottom from under this base and totally unfounded charge. Zainab was the Prophet's own cousin and being

39. No blame can attach to the Prophet with respect to that which Allah has made incumbent upon him. Such indeed was the way of Allah with those who have passed away before—and the command of Allah is a decree ordained—³¹⁰⁵

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ
اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا
مَقْدُورًا ۝٣٩

40. Those who delivered the messages of Allah “and feared Him, and feared none but Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a Reckoner.”^{3105A}

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ
أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ۝٤٠

467 : 13.

so closely related to him he must have seen her many times, for “Purdah” had not as yet been enjoined. Besides, it was in deference to his own persistently expressed wish that Zainab had reluctantly agreed to marry Zaid. It is on record that she and her brother had desired before her marriage with Zaid that she should be taken in marriage by the Holy Prophet himself. What was it that prevented the Holy Prophet from marrying her when she was a virgin and when she herself ardently desired to get married to him? The whole story evidently seems to be a figment of the “fertile” imagination of the Holy Prophet’s hostile critics and it is an insult to human intellect to give the least credence to it. But while there are some Christian critics like Muir and Margolioth who find fault with the Holy Prophet for having married Zainab, there are others better informed and more honest like the good and noble Rev. Bosworth Smith who find nothing in this marriage to cavil at. The Rev. gentleman says :

It should be remembered, however, that most of Muhammad’s marriages may be explained, at least, as much by his pity for the forlorn condition of the persons

concerned, as by other motives. They were almost all of them widows who were not remarkable either for their beauty or their wealth, but quite the reverse. May not this fact, and his undoubted faithfulness to Khadijah till her dying day, and till he himself was fifty years of age, give us additional ground to hope that calumny or misconception has been at work in the story of Zainab (“Muhammad and Muhammadanism”).

3105. **Commentary :**

The reference in the words, “that which Allah has made incumbent upon him,” and “the command of Allah is a decree ordained,” is to the Holy Prophet’s marriage with Zainab. The words show that this marriage took place in obedience to express Divine command.

3105A. **Commentary :**

Though the Holy Prophet knew that Zainab being the divorced wife of Zaid known to be his adopted son, his marriage with her would give rise to much criticism among the Arabs, he did not at all hesitate to marry her when he found that it was God’s command to do so. In the performance of his sacred mission the Holy Prophet never cared for the feelings and susceptibilities of anybody. In fact, God’s

41. Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but *he is* the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah has full knowledge of all things.³¹⁰⁶

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ
اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۝

Prophets do not fear anyone in the discharge of their duties. So, the words “thou didst fear men” in v. 38 should be taken as signifying that the Holy Prophet did not fear men but he feared *for* them, lest by regarding Zainab’s marriage with Zaid a miscalculation of the Prophet, they might injure their own souls.

3106. Important Words :

خاتم النبيين (Seal of the Prophets). خاتم (Khātam) is derived from ختم. They say ختم الشيء *i.e.* he sealed, stamped, impressed or imprinted the thing or he put the seal on it. This is the primary signification of this word. Or the primary signification of ختم (khatmun) is the act of covering over the thing. It also signifies the protecting of what is in a writing by marking or stamping a piece of clay upon it, or by means of a seal of any kind. ختم الشيء also means, he reached the end of the thing. ختم القرآن means, he recited the whole of the Qur’ān. This is the secondary meaning of the word. Thus خاتم (khātam) means, a signet-ring; a seal or stamp and a mark; the end or last part or portion and result or issue of a thing; the hollow of the back of the neck. The words ختم (khatmun) and خاتم (khātim and khātam) are almost synonymous and mean a signet. خاتم (khātam) also signifies, embellishment or ornament, the best and most perfect (Lane, Aqrab, Mufradāt, Fath & Zurqānī). So the expression خاتم النبيين would mean, the Seal of the Prophets; the best and most perfect of the Prophets; the embellishment and ornament

of the Prophets. Secondly, the expression may also mean, the last of the Prophets.

Commentary :

Much confusion and misunderstanding seems to prevail as to what is the real spiritual status and position of the Holy Prophet as indicated by the expression خاتم النبيين *i.e.* the Seal of the Prophets. A careful study of the context, however, removes the prevalent misconception. At Mecca when all the Holy Prophet’s male children died in their childhood, his enemies taunted him with being أتر (one who has no male issue), meaning that in the absence of male heirs to succeed him his Movement would sooner or later come to an end (Muḥīt). In answer to this taunt of disbelievers it was emphatically declared in Sūra Kausar (الكوثر) that not the Holy Prophet but his enemies would remain issueless. After the revelation of Sūra Kausar the idea naturally found favour with the early Muslims that the Holy Prophet would be blessed with sons who would live to an adult age. The verse under comment removed that misconception inasmuch as it declared that the Prophet is not, never was, nor will ever be the father of any grown-up young men (رجال meaning grown-up young men). The verse under comment while appearing to be in conflict with Sūra Kausar in which not the Holy Prophet but his enemies have been threatened with being issueless, in reality seeks to set at rest doubts and misgivings to which this seeming contradiction gives

rise. It says that the Holy Prophet is رسول الله *i.e.* the spiritual father of a whole *Ummat* and he is also خاتم النبيين signifying that he is the spiritual father of all the past and future Prophets. So when he is the spiritual father of all the believers and all Prophets, how can he be said to be أبتر *i.e.* issueless. But if the expression خاتم النبيين be taken to mean that the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets and that no Prophet will come after him, then the verse appears to be out of tune with the context and instead of refuting the objection of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet was issueless, supports and reinforces it.

Briefly, according to the meaning of the word خاتم, the expression خاتم النبيين can have four possible meanings :

(1) That the Holy Prophet was the Seal of the Prophets, *i.e.*, no Prophet, past or future, can be regarded as true unless his prophethood bears the seal of the Holy Prophet. The prophethood of every past Prophet must be confirmed and testified to by the Holy Prophet and nobody can attain to prophethood after him except by being his أمتي (follower). All claims to prophethood must be judged and tested by reference to the revelation received by the Holy Prophet and to his teachings.

(2) That the Holy Prophet was the best, the noblest and the most perfect of all the Prophets and that he was also a source of embellishment for them (Zurqānī, Sharah Mawāhib al-Ladunniyya).

(3) That the Holy Prophet was the last of the Law-bearing Prophets. This interpretation has been accepted by many eminent Muslim theologians, saints and savants such as Ibn ‘Arabī, Shāh Walī-Allah, Imām ‘Alī Qārī, Mujaddid Alf Thānī, etc. According to these great scholars and saints no Prophet can come after the Holy Prophet who should abrogate his

Millat or should not be in his *Ummat* (Futūhāt, Tafhīmāt, Mukātabāt & Yawāqīt wa’l Jawāhir). ‘Ā’ishah, the talented spouse of the Holy Prophet, has removed all ambiguity about the meaning of the expression خاتم النبيين. She is reported to have said:

قولوا انه خاتم النبيين و لا تقولوا لا نبي بعده *i.e.* Say that he (the Holy Prophet) is خاتم النبيين but do not say that there will be no Prophet after him (Manthūr). This saying of ‘Ā’ishah makes it quite clear that the expression خاتم النبيين and لا نبي بعده were considered by her to be contradictory to each other in meaning and significance.

(4) That the Holy Prophet was the last of the Prophets, but only in this sense that all the qualities and attributes of prophethood found their most perfect and complete consummation and expression in him; خاتم in the sense of being the last word in excellence and perfection is of common use.

Moreover, the Qur’ān clearly speaks of the advent of Prophets after the Holy Prophet. The following two verses leave no ambiguity on this point:-

And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these (4 : 70).

O children of Adam! if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My Signs come unto you, then whoso shall fear God and do good deeds, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve (7 : 36).

The Holy Prophet himself was clear in his mind as to the continuity of prophethood after him. He is reported to have said: “If Abraham (his son) had lived long, he would have been a Prophet” (Māja, *kitāb al-Janā’iz*), and, “Abū Bakr is best of men after me, except that a Prophet should appear” (Kanz al-‘Ummāl).

- 6 42. O ye who believe! ^aremember Allah with much remembrance;³¹⁰⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۝

43. ^bAnd glorify Him morning and evening.

وَسَبِّحْهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۝

44. He it is Who sends blessings on you, as *do* His angels, ^cthat He may bring you forth from all *kinds* of darkness into light. And He is Merciful to the believers.^{3107A}

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ۝

45. ^dTheir greeting on the day when they meet Him, will be 'Peace.' And He has prepared for them an honourable reward.

تَحِيَّاتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ ۚ وَاعَدَ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا ۝

46. O Prophet! truly 'We have sent thee as a Witness, and a Bearer of glad tidings, and a Warner,³¹⁰⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝

^a4 : 104; 8 : 46 ; 62 : 11. ¹3 : 42 : 19 : 12. ^c2 : 258; 14 : 6; 57 : 10; 65 : 12.

^d10 : 11; 36 : 59. ^e25 : 57; 35 : 25; 48 : 9.

3107. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the remembrance of God will play a great part in the wonderful revolution that the Holy Prophet will bring about among his people by his noble example.

3107A. Commentary :

The *Sūra* under comment primarily deals with the domestic life of the Holy Prophet and tells us, how it was not only pure and beyond reproach but was an ideal and exemplary one. The present and the next few verses serve as a prelude to the real subject of marriage and divorce in relation to the Prophet, which begins with v. 50 below. The marriages of the Holy Prophet have been subjected to much mean and vile criticism. To this a somewhat detailed reference has already been made (33 : 38). The present verse, however, means to say that that

great and noble Prophet who brought about such a wonderful revolution in the lives of his people and "brought them forth from darkness into light" could not be the type of man his traducers vainly try to depict him.

The words *يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ* when used about God mean, "He sends down blessings upon you," but when used about the angels or the believers they mean, "they pray for you."

3108. Commentary :

In this and the next verse five prominent qualities of the Holy Prophet have been mentioned to show that he possesses all the necessary qualifications which a spiritual Leader who is entrusted with the Divine mission "to bring men out of darkness into light," should possess ; (1) he is a Witness. *i.e.* a promulgator of the Law and a

47. And as a Summoner unto Allah by His Command, and as a Lamp that gives *bright* light.^{3108A}

48. And announce to the believers the glad tidings that they will have great bounty from Allah.

49. "And follow not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and leave alone their annoyance, and put thy trust in Allah; for Allah is sufficient as a Guardian."³¹⁰⁹

50. O ye who believe! when you marry believing women and then divorce them ^bbefore you have touched them, then you have no right against them with regard to the period of waiting that you reckon. So make some provision for them and send them away in a handsome manner.³¹¹⁰

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِأُذُنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ۝

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ۝

وَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعْ أَذُنَهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ

عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۝

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ

مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَتَّسُوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ

تَعْتَدُونَهَا فَبِتَعَوُّهُنَّ وَسَرَّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ۝

^a18 : 29; 25 : 53. ^b2 : 237.

model; (2) he is a Bearer of glad tidings, *i.e.* God has not lost interest in men and continues to send His Messengers and Prophets to reclaim lost humanity when there is need for one; (3) he is a Warner telling men that if they did not benefit by his teaching and persisted in their evil ways, they will come to grief; (4) he is a Summoner unto Allah by His command, *i.e.* he is not a self-appointed Reformer but a Divinely-commissioned Teacher; and (5) he is a Lamp that gives light, *i.e.* now, he alone is "the light and the way."

3108A. **Commentary :**

In this verse the Holy Prophet has been likened to the sun, thus indicating that as the sun is the central point in the physical universe so is the Holy Prophet the central point in the spiritual realm, *i.e.*, he is like the sun in the firmament of Prophets who are like so many stars

and moons in comparison with him. He is also like the sun among his own Companions whom he himself has likened to stars. He is reported to have said: My Companions are like so many stars; whomsoever of them you follow you will be rightly guided (Ṣaghīr).

3109. **Commentary :**

The reference in the words "leave alone their annoyance" might be to the vile attacks that were to be made by evil-minded critics upon the spotless character of the Holy Prophet on account of some of the marriages he had to enter into in the latter part of his life.

3110. **Commentary :**

The words "and send them away in a handsome manner" signify (1) that no reproach or disgrace should be considered to be attached to divorce; (2) that the divorced woman should ordinarily be paid more than her part of the stipulated dower, and (3) that after divorce her

51. O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives whom thou hast paid their dowries, and those whom thy right hand possesses from among those whom Allah has given thee as gains of war, and the daughters of thy paternal uncle, and the daughters of thy paternal aunts, and the daughters of thy maternal uncle, and the daughters of thy maternal aunts who have emigrated with thee and any other believing woman if she offers herself for marriage to the Prophet provided the Prophet desires to marry her: *this provision is only for thee, as against other believers*—We have already made known what We have enjoined on them concerning their wives and those whom their right hands possess—in order that there may be no difficulty for thee *in the discharge of thy work*. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.³¹¹¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي أَتَيْتَ
أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ
وَبَنَاتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ
خَلَتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ
وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا
خَالِصَةً لَكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا
فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ
لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ⑤

freedom to act as she likes with regard to herself should not be interfered with.

3111. Commentary :

This verse should be read along with vv. 29 and 30 above. In those verses the wives of the Holy Prophet were offered a choice between the companionship of the Holy Prophet and the material benefits and comforts of life, but they preferred the Prophet's company. The present verse by implication refers to that reply of the Prophet's consorts which is recorded in the books of history but expressly nowhere in the Qur'ān. Till they gave their reply, the marital relations between them and the Holy Prophet remained, as it were, in a state of suspension. The verse shows that while the wives of the Holy Prophet preferred his company to material goods and amenities of life, he too had great consideration for their feelings, and though he

was given the choice to retain such of them as he liked (v. 52) he did not exercise the choice and in deference to his wishes God permitted him in the present verse to retain all his wives.

The verse refers to three kinds of women whom the Holy Prophet could marry in addition to his already wedded wives: (1) Women who were taken prisoner in wars against Islam; (2) women who had migrated to Medina with the Holy Prophet, and (3) a woman who should offer herself for marriage to him. This shows that the Holy Prophet's marriages were motivated by considerations other than sensuous gratification as his ignorant and mischievous critics try to depict. Those who had left their hearths and homes for the sake of Islam and those whose husbands had been killed in wars fighting in defence of Islam had special claim on the Holy Prophet's consideration. It is in view of these

considerations that he married most of his wives. He married Ḥafṣah whose husband was killed in the Battle of Badr, Zainab bint Khuzaimah whose husband was killed in the Battle of Uḥad, Umm Salmah whose husband died in 4 A.H., and Umm Ḥabībah, daughter of Abū Sufyān, who became a widow in 5 or 6 A.H. (in exile in Abyssinia). He married Juwairiyah and Ṣafīyyah, both widows, in 5 A.H. and 7 A.H. respectively, seeking a union with and pacification of their tribes. It is worthy of note that a hundred families of the Banī Muṣṭaliq were liberated by Muslims when the Holy Prophet married Juwairiyah. Maimūnah, another widow, it is said, offered herself to be taken in marriage by the Holy Prophet which offer he condescended to accept in the interest of the education and training of Muslim women. He married Zainab, the divorced wife of Zaid in 5 A.H. in order to put a stop to a foolish custom prevailing among the Arabs and in order also to assuage her wounded feelings as the respected lady had felt deeply humiliated at being divorced by Zaid. He married Māriah in 7 A.H. and thus by raising a freed slave girl to the highly eminent spiritual status of the "Mother of the Faithful" he gave a death blow to slavery. Such were the pious and righteous motives of our noble Master in marrying widows and divorced women, by no means noted for their youth or beauty, and yet his cruel and mean traducers vainly try to depict him as a person who was given to gratifying his carnal desires. They deliberately ignore the patent fact that up to the age of 25 he lived the spotless life of a celibate. Then in the prime of his youth he married a lady fifteen years his senior and lived with her a most happy life till he was an old man of fifty and she

about sixty-five. After her death he married Saudah, another lady of a very advanced age. He married all his other wives, to which exception has been taken by evil-minded carpers, between 2 A.H. and 7 A.H., a period when he was constantly engaged in active fighting and his life was perpetually in danger and the fate of Islam itself hung in the balance. Could any sane person in such situation of danger and uncertainty conceive of contracting marriage after marriage from motives attributed to the Holy Prophet? After this he lived for about three years as virtual ruler of the whole of Arabia when all the comforts and amenities of life were at his disposal and yet he entered into no further marriage. Does not this fact alone establish the honesty and sincerity of the Holy Prophet's motives in marrying his wives?

The words "if she entrusts herself to the Prophet" have been taken as specially referring to Maimūnah who is reported to have offered herself to be taken into marriage by the Holy Prophet. The clause, "This provision is only for thee as against other believers," means that it was a special privilege of the Holy Prophet and was due to the special nature of his duties as a Divine Prophet. In fact, marriages of the Holy Prophet were dictated by much higher and nobler considerations than merely personal. The clause may also refer to the special permission granted to the Holy Prophet, to retain all his wives, after the commandment contained in 4 : 4 was revealed, limiting to four the number of wives allowed to Muslims at one time.

The words, "We have already made known what We have enjoined on them concerning their wives," refer to the commandment contained in 4 : 4.

52. Thou mayest defer *the marriage* of any of them that thou pleasest, and receive unto thyself whom thou pleasest; and if thou desirest to *take back* any of those whom thou hast put aside, there is no blame on thee. That is more likely that their eyes may be cooled, and that they may not grieve, and that they may all be pleased with that which thou hast given them. And Allah knows what is in your hearts; and Allah is All-Knowing, Forbearing.³¹¹²

53. It is not allowed thee to marry women after that, nor to change them for *other* wives even though their goodness please thee, except any that thy right hand possesses. And Allah is Watchful over all things.³¹¹³

رُجِّي مَنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤَيِّ إِلَيْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ ابْتَغَيْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ذَلِكَ
أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقَرَّ أَعْيُنُهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا
آتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ﴿٥٢﴾

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدِّلَ بِهِنَّ
مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ
يَمِينُكَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ﴿٥٣﴾

3112. Important Words :

رجأ (thou mayest defer) is derived from رَجَأَ. They say رَجَأَ الْأَمْرَ i.e. he postponed, put off, deferred or delayed an affair. The Quranic expression, مَرَجُونَ لَأَمْرَاهُ (9 : 107) means, those about whom decision has been deferred for the decree of Allah (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Whereas on the one hand the wives of the Holy Prophet were given the option to choose between his company and the material comforts of life and worldly goods (33 : 29-30), on the other the Holy Prophet was also given the same choice to retain, or part with, any of his wives. All his wives lost no time in indicating their preference. They chose to cast in their lot with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet, on his part, was equally considerate. He signified his intention to retain all of them. This decision of the Prophet greatly pleased them. This is the

meaning of the words: *That they may all be pleased with that which thou hast given them.*

The present and the previous verse contain permissive regulations for the Holy Prophet, but the Prophet did not take advantage of any one of them, nor did he put aside or divorce any of his wives.

3113. Commentary :

This verse was revealed in 7 A.H. after which the Holy Prophet contracted no further marriage. He was prohibited to do so. He was also not permitted to divorce any of the existing wives. This was possibly in deference to their dignity as "Mothers of the Faithful" and perhaps was also due to the fact that they had preferred the rigour and austerity of the Holy Prophet's domestic life to worldly comforts. God appreciated their sacrifice and forbade the Holy Prophet to marry any more wife or to divorce any one of the existing wives.

R.7 54. O ye who believe! enter not the houses of the Prophet unless leave is granted to you for a meal,—not waiting for its *appointed* time. But enter when you are invited, and when you have finished eating disperse, without seeking to engage in talk. That causes inconvenience to the Prophet, and he feels shy of *asking* you to leave, but Allah is not shy of *saying* what is true. And when you ask them—the wives of the Prophet—for anything, ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it behoves you not to cause inconvenience to the Messenger of Allah, nor that you should ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be, in the sight of Allah, an enormity.³¹¹⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نَبِزٍ إِنَّهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَعِجِلُ مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَعِجِلُ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنَاجُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٧﴾

The words “Allah is Watchful over all things” may signify that God knew full well the moral responsibilities of the wives of the Holy Prophet. Other women, although they might be superior to them in some respects, were not to be as useful or fitted for the great and noble task which the Prophet’s wives had to perform.

3114. Commentary :

The teaching of social ethics and domestic morals and manners with special reference to the Holy Prophet’s marriage with Zainab and the calumnies and false charges of which the evil-minded “Hypocrites” accused him form the subject of the present verse. Some of the social manners taught in this verse are: One should not enter a house uninvited and when invited one should be punctual. It is as bad to be before time as to be behind time. After meals one should depart, not wasting one’s own and other

peoples’ time in the usual post-prandial idle talk. These are some of the rules of social conduct which need to be learnt and observed.

The commandment embodied in the words, “and when you ask them for anything, ask them from behind a curtain,” is intended to discourage too much familiarity between the sexes, the pronoun *هن* (them) by implication, applying to all women.

The clause, “That is purer for your hearts and their hearts,” may mean; (a) that it may lead to purity of thoughts, and (b) that such conduct may protect women from slanderous tongues.

Marriage with the widows of the Holy Prophet has been declared a grievous sin in this verse. Being the “Mothers of the Faithful” it was inconsistent with their spiritual dignity to marry any of their “spiritual sons.” Moreover, as wives of the Prophet they were entrusted with

55. "Whether you reveal a thing or conceal it, Allah knows all things full well.

إِنْ تَبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۝٥٥

56. There is no blame on them *in this respect* with regard to their fathers or their sons or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers or the sons of their sisters, or their womenfolk or those whom their right hands possess. And, fear Allah, *O wives of the Prophet*, Verily, Allah is Witness over all things.³¹¹⁵

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا ابْنَاتِ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَائِهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ۝٥٦

57. Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe, you *too* should invoke blessings on him and salute *him* with the salutation of peace.³¹¹⁶

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ۝٥٧

58. Verily, ^bthose who malign Allah and His Messenger—Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them an abasing punishment.³¹¹⁷

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۝٥٨

٤٣ : ٣٠; ٤٠ : ١٥٠. ٥٩ : ٦١.

the great task of the spiritual training of Muslim men and women which required utmost reverence for them on their part.

3115. Commentary :

This verse lays down exceptions to the commandment given in verse 54 above. Women can go before these relations inside the house without observing "Purdah" or can converse freely with them.

3116. Commentary :

The sending down of blessings by Allah and His angels upon the Holy Prophet signifies that

those who seek to retard the progress of his cause by slandering him and bringing false accusations against him live in a fool's paradise. By their nefarious activities they can do him no harm. His cause will continue to progress and prosper because God and His angels bless it.

3117. Commentary :

By "maligning Allah" is meant "seeking to retard the cause of truth" and by "maligning His Messenger," is meant "seeking to slander and defame him."

59. "And those who malign believing men and believing women for what they have not earned shall bear *the guilt of a calumny and a manifest sin*."³¹¹⁸

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا
اَكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ اِخْتَلَوْا بُهْتَانًا وَاِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ۝

٢. 8 60. O Prophet! tell thy wives and thy daughters, and the women of the believers, that they should draw close to them portions of their *loose* outer coverings. That is more likely that they may *thus* be distinguished and not molested. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.³¹¹⁹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
يُذْنِبْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ اَدْنَىٰ اَنْ
يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ۝

44 : 113; 24 : 24.

3118. Commentary :

The word أذى which is infinitive noun from يؤذون means both annoying and maligning.

3119. Important Words :

جَلَابِيب (outer coverings) is the plural of جلباب which is derived from جلب. They say جلبابه جلباباً i.e. he put on himself a garment of the kind called جلباب. This word has several meanings; (a) a woman's outer wrapping garment; this is its primary signification; (b) a shirt; (c) a garment that envelops the whole body; (d) the kind of covering called خمار; (e) a garment with which a woman covers her head and bosom; (f) a woman's head-covering; (g) a garment worn by a woman that entirely envelops the body so that not even a hand is left uncovered; (h) a garment or other thing that one uses as a covering (Lane).

يذنب (draw close) is aorist from أدنى which is transitive verb from دنى which means, he or it was or became near. أدناه means, he made him draw near. أدنت عليها ثوبها means, she let down her garment upon her and veiled herself with it. أدنيت الستر means, I let down the veil, or curtain, for the purpose of concealment (Lane & Aqrab)

Commentary :

This verse contains the basic commandment with regard to "Purdah" as enjoined by Islam. For a full discussion, however, of this subject see 24 : 32 where the present verse has also been discussed. Briefly, it may be stated here that Islamic "Purdah" is intended to serve a double purpose. It enjoins privacy and recommends decorum and dignified behaviour. Women are not allowed to meet men promiscuously and they are expected to observe certain rules regarding dress when going out of their houses.

61. If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who cause agitation in the city, desist not, We shall surely make thee take action against them; then they will not dwell therein as thy neighbours, save for a little while.³¹²⁰

لَيْنَ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا
يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۚ

3120. Important Words :

مرجفون (who cause agitation) is the plural of مرجف which is active participle from أرجف which is the transitive form of رجع which means, it was or became in a state of commotion or agitation, or in a state of violent agitation. رجع القوم means, the people prepared themselves for war. أرجفوا في الشيء means, they said what was false respecting the thing or they told many evil and false tales respecting the thing in order that the people might become in a state of commotion, agitation or disturbance in consequence thereof. أرجفوا alone means, they said what was false in relating tales of conflicts and factions or discords and the like. They say أرجفوا في المدينة كذا i.e. they told in the town and country of such a matter, in order that they might cause commotion or agitation, etc., without there being anything thereof true in their estimation (Lane).

لنغريَنَّكَ (We shall make thee take action against them) is formed from أغرا which is derived from غرا. They say غرى به i.e. it adhered to it; he became attached to it; he loved it; he adhered, clung or clove to it. أغراه به means, he made him to become attached to or fond of it, to adhere, cleave or cling to it; he incited, urged or instigated him to do it. أغريت الكلب بالصميد means, I incited, or

urged the dog against the game. أغراه بهم means, he set him upon them or over them; or made him to have masterly dominion or authority over them. The Quranic expression أغرى بينهم العداوة means, He cast enmity between them as though he made it cleave to them (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As the present *Sūra* deals with the vicissitudes through which Islam had to pass during the first few years of its life at Medina, some reference to the "Hypocrites" and Jews of Medina was called for, as they formed a substantial part of the population of Medina. They sought to put all sorts of obstacles and impediments in the way of Islam, lest it should gain political power and prestige. The main weapon in their armoury against Islam was the spreading of false news. The verse under comment foretold the doom of these people at a time when they thought that their plots and conspiracies against Islam would succeed. After the Battle of the Ditch Banū Quraizah, the last Jewish tribe living in Medina, were severely punished and Medina became completely rid of the Jews. The capacity of the "Hypocrites" to create mischief also received a severe set-back, as the defeat and dispersion of the confederated armies added vastly to the political power and prestige of Islam.

62. *Then they will be accursed. Wherever they are found, they will be seized, and cut into pieces.*³¹²¹

63. "Such has been the way of Allah in the case of those who passed away before, and thou wilt never find a change in the way of Allah."³¹²²

64. ^bMen ask thee concerning the Hour. Say, 'The knowledge of it is with Allah alone.' And what will make thee know that the Hour may be nigh?³¹²³

65. ^cAllah has surely cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a burning fire,

66. Wherein they will abide for ever. They will find *therein* no friend nor helper.

67. On the day when their faces are turned over in the fire, they will say, ^d"O, would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!"³¹²⁴

مَلْعُونِينَ ۖ أَيُّنَا ثَقِفُوا أَخْدُوا وَقُتِلُوا تَقْتِيلًا ۝١٧

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ نَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۝١٨

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا ۝١٩

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ۝٢٠

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ۝٢١

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَلَيَّتْنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ ۝٢٢

^a17 : 78; 35 : 44; 48 : 24.

^b7 : 188; 79 : 43.

^c7 : 45.

^d25 : 28.

3121. Commentary :

It is an established fact of history that ignominy and humiliation have dogged the footsteps of the ill-fated Jewish people throughout the ages. Their return to Palestine and the establishment of the Republic of Israel seems to be only a temporary phase.

3122. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that it is an invariable Divine practice that the enemies of truth fail in their wicked designs against it and come to grief in the long run. This has happened in the time of every Divine Reformer and Prophet.

3123. Commentary :

In verse 25 the disbelievers and "Hypocrites" were warned that they would be punished. In the present verse they are told that the time of their punishment has drawn very near. The reference in "the Hour" may be to the Battle of the Ditch.

3124. Important Words :

وجه (faces) is the plural of وجه which means face, direction; object and motive; deed or action to which a person directs his attention; the thing itself; the desired way. وجوه also means leaders; prominent persons. The word seems to have been used in this sense in the present verse. See also 2 : 113, 149.

68. "And they will say, 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones and they led us astray from the way.'³¹²⁵

69. 'Our Lord, give them double punishment and curse them with a very great curse.'

9 70. O ye who believe! be not like those who vexed and slandered Moses; but Allah cleared him of what they spoke of him. ^bAnd he is honourable in the sight of Allah.³¹²⁶

71. O ye who believe! fear Allah, and say the straightforward word.³¹²⁷

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا

السَّبِيلَ ١٨

رَبَّنَا إِنَّهُمْ ضَعُفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا

كَبِيرًا ١٩

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَى

فَبَرَّاهُ اللَّهُ وَمَا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا ٢٠

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ٢١

^a7 : 39; 14 : 22; 28 : 64; 34 : 32-33; 40 : 48-49. ^b19 : 52.

3125. Commentary :

In the preceding verse reference was made to the leaders of disbelief. Here the rank and file are mentioned. It is human nature that when mischeif-makers are punished, they seek to shift the blame for their evil deeds to others. The leaders blame their followers for following them blindly and the rank and file accuse their leaders of deceiving them by superior intellect. In the next verse the followers demand that double punishment be inflicted on their leaders for their own evil deeds and for having misled them.

3126. Commentary :

From the Bible (Num. 12 : 1-10) and other Jewish literature it appears that Moses was made the butt of serious calumnies, some of which were : (1) Korah induced a woman to bring against Moses a charge of illicit connection with her.

(b) Having become jealous of Aaron's increasing influence with his people, Moses sought to kill him. (3) Moses was a victim of leprosy and syphilis; and (4) Sāmīrī charged him with idolatry.

The Holy Prophet bore very close resemblance to Moses. Similar allegations were bound to be made against him. God, however, cleared both these noble Prophets of the wicked charges brought against them by their enemies and thus nullified their nefarious designs.

3127. Commentary :

The *Sūra*, as mentioned above, deals with some of the most important laws of the *Shari'at*. Quite appropriately it closes with a basic direction in this respect. The direction is to the effect that believers should always be on their guard against incurring the displeasure of God by unseemly conduct and should be scrupulously straightforward in dealings with other people.

72. He will set right your actions for you and forgive you your sins. "And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, shall surely attain a mighty success.

73. Verily, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Indeed, he is *capable of being* unjust to, and neglectful of, himself.³¹²⁸

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٢﴾

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴿٧٣﴾

44 : 14; 24 : 53; 48 : 18.

3128. Important Words :

حمله (bore it). حمله means, he bore or carried it, or carried it off or away; he gave him a beast upon which to ride. حمل بدين means, he bore or took upon himself the responsibility for the payment of debt. حمل الامانة means, he took upon himself or accepted the trust, or he betrayed the trust, he proved false to it (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7 : 177.

ظالم (unjust) is the intensive form of ظلم which is active participle from ظلم which means, he did wrong or acted unjustly, wrongfully or tyrannically; he put the thing in a wrong place or in a place not its own. ظلمه means, he imposed upon him a thing that was beyond his power or ability (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 36 & 17 : 60.

جهولا (neglectful) is the intensive form of جاهل which is active participle from جاهل (jahila) which means, he was ignorant. جهل عليه means, he acted towards him in a silly and foolish manner and wrongly. جهل الحق means, he neglected or ignored the truth. جاهل means, ignorant, neglectful; foolish or silly and wrong in conduct (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

This verse has presented Commentators of

the Qur'an with some difficulty. In view of different significations of the words used, the verse seems to be susceptible of the following interpretations:

(I) Taking the word حمل as meaning to accept, and امانة as signifying the trust of man's love of God, the verse would mean that a great spiritual destiny awaited man. He was made God's vicegerent on earth (2 : 31). He was gifted with the great capacities and powers to assimilate and manifest in his person Divine attributes and to become the image of his Creator. This was indeed a great trust which man, alone of all the universe, was found capable of discharging, other beings and things—the angels, the heavens, the earth and the mountains—being quite unequal to the task. They refused, as it were, to bear it. Man accepted this responsibility because he alone could discharge it, as he had been endowed with great natural qualities. He was capable of being ظالم (unjust to himself) and جهول (neglectful of himself) i.e., he could be unjust to himself in the sense that he could bear any hardship and undergo any sacrifice for the sake of his Creator, and he was capable of being neglectful in the sense that in the discharge of his great and sacred trust he could be neglectful of his own interest and desire for a life of ease and comfort.

74. *The result is that Allah will punish hypocritical men and hypocritical women, and idolatrous men and idolatrous women; and Allah turns in mercy to believing men and believing women; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.*³¹²⁹

لَيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٩﴾

44 : 28; 9 : 104.

(2) Taking امانة (trust), however, in the sense of the Law of the Qur'ān and الانسان signifying the perfect man, i.e. the Holy Prophet, the verse would mean that of all the denizens of heavens, and earth, and of all great men, and leaders of thought, the Holy Prophet alone was found to be capable of being entrusted with the revelation of the most perfect and final Law—the Qur'ān, because no other man, or being was endowed with those great qualities which were indispensable for the full and adequate discharge of this great responsibility.

(3) Taking حمل in the sense of betraying or proving false to a trust, the verse would mean that the trust of the Divine Law was imposed upon man and other terrestrial and celestial beings. All of them with the exception of man refused to betray this trust, i.e. they carried out fully and faithfully all the laws to which they were made subject. The whole nature was true

to its laws and the angels also carried out their duties loyally and faithfully (16 : 51). It is man alone who having been endowed with discretion and volition defies and violates Divine commandments because he is unjust and neglects and ignores his duties and responsibilities. This meaning of the verse is supported by 41 : 12 wherein it is stated that the heavens and earth were commanded to carry out the laws that were imposed on them and they gave their willing and unconditional obedience to them.

3129. Commentary :

The verse means to say that with the revelation of the *Shari'at* the people became split up into two classes : (1) Those acting upon it came to be known as believers and received the favours and grace of God. (2) Those who rejected and defied it got the unenviable appellation of hypocrites and idolaters and were visited with Divine punishment.

CHAPTER 34

AL - SABA'

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation, Title and Context

The *Sūra* seems to owe its title to the fact that it contains a somewhat detailed reference to Saba', a people of Yemen who were destroyed by a great flood. It was revealed at Mecca. While it is difficult to assign to it a definite date from the nature of its contents, it appears to belong to the early Meccan period, though some scholars place it in the middle Meccan period, while some others like Rodwell and Noldeke give it even a later date.

The preceding several *Sūrās* embodied prophecies about the rise, progress and the ultimate victory of Islam over false Faiths, while in the immediately preceding Chapter, Al-Aḥzāb, the subject was dealt with at some length as to how the combined forces of darkness utterly failed in their nefarious designs to destroy Islam and how Islam emerged from one of the severest ordeals with flying colours, its power and prestige having been considerably enhanced. In the present *Sūra*, however, the Muslims have been warned that they should be on their guard against falling into bad ways because when wealth and prosperity come to a people they are prone to give themselves up to a life of ease and luxury. Since God has no particular relation with any community for all time, if a people in the hey-day of their glory and material prosperity lead a life of sin—as did the Israelites after Solomon or the Sabeans—they too suffer the consequences of their sinful deeds.

The immediate connection, of this *Sūra* with its predecessor consists in the fact that towards the close of that *Sūra* it was stated that of the whole creation of God man alone was endowed with such inborn qualities and capacities as enable him to fulfil the demands of the *Sharī'at* and to imbibe and demonstrate in his person Divine attributes. All other species of creation were incapable of doing so. Therefore, when the great responsibility of conforming life to the Divine Law was placed before man and other beings and things, they all refused to accept it except man because he alone was found capable of going to the utmost limit in sacrificing his comforts and interests in the discharge of his great and grave responsibility.

The *Sūra* opens with the celebration of praises of the Wise and All-Aware God, Who knowing that of all creation man alone could bear the heavy burden of carrying out the grave responsibility of fulfilling the demands of the *Sharī'at*, laid that burden on his shoulders, but having laid it, He did not leave him alone. He continued to help him in the performance of his noble task to its completion.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* has six sections and fifty-five verses. It opens with the celebration of the praises of Allah "to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth," implying that as God is Great and Almighty, a people who seek to defy His authority are sure to meet with failure and frustration. The disbelievers, it further says, try to delude themselves into the belief that their rejection of the Message of Islam will go unpunished and that "the Hour will never come upon them" (v. 4). They accuse the Holy Prophet of being an impostor who seeks to impose his leadership on them. But the Prophet is no liar or forger but a true Messenger of God and as such his cause will grow and prosper and disbelievers will be punished for rejecting him. Their power will break and their glory depart and this fact will constitute a proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet's mission.

The *Sūra* proceeds to make a somewhat detailed reference to the Prophets, David and Solomon, who made vast conquests and subdued rebellious tribes and in whose reigns the Israelite power and glory rose to its zenith. The result was that in the pride of their power and prosperity the Israelites fell into evil ways and began to lead a life of sin which resulted in Divine wrath descending upon them. The reference to David and Solomon is followed by a reference to the Sabeans who were a highly prosperous and cultured people, but who like the Israelites defied and disobeyed Divine commandments and like them incurred the displeasure of God and were destroyed by a mighty flood. By referring to the might, glory and prosperity of the Israelites under David and Solomon, and to that of the Sabeans, and to their subsequent destruction, the *Sūra* gives a warning to Muslims that great wealth, power and prosperity will also be bestowed on them, but if in the hey-day of their glory they, like the Israelites and the Sabeans, gave themselves up to a life of luxury and ease, they will be punished like them.

The third section (*rukū'*) deals with the main theme of the *Sūra*, viz., the progressive rise of the cause of Islam and the sad fate that is in store for idol-worshippers and their false deities. The disbelievers are challenged to call upon their deities to obstruct the progress of Islam, and to arrest the decline and downfall of their own false ideals and institutions. They are told that no power on earth could stop this from happening. They are further warned that when the "Hour" of their ultimate defeat arrives, the sinners and the guilty will be punished. This process of decline and decay of disbelief began with the Battle of Badr and reached its culmination on the day when Mecca—then the great citadel of idol-worship in Arabia—fell, and the Ka'ba was cleared of idols. In order to make disbelievers realize that their cause was destined to perish and Islam was to sweep away everything before it, they are told to study the operation of the laws of nature, which were all working in favour of Islam. In answer to the disbelievers' demand as to when the prophecy about the rise and progress of Islam will be fulfilled, the *Sūra* goes so far as to fix the actual date when palpable signs of the rise of Islam and decline and downfall of disbelief will begin to appear. These signs, it proceeds to add, will begin to take place about a year after the flight of the Holy Prophet from Mecca, when the Quraishites, by expelling him from his native town, will render themselves deserving of Divine punishment.

Next, the *Sūra* says that whenever a Divine Reformer makes his appearance it is always the vested interests and privileged classes that stand in his way. They feel and apprehend that the rise of the new Movement will weaken their hold on the poor people who, by accepting the

new Message, will refuse to be exploited or suppressed any more. So they fight it tooth and nail and try to nip it in the bud and the suppressed and exploited classes are, by threats and intimidation, dragooned into accepting their lead and opposing the Divine Reformer. This has happened in the time of every Prophet. But no amount of opposition from any direction has ever been able to stay or retard the progress of truth. When, however, the time of reckoning for the disbelievers arrives, both the exploited and the exploiters begin to curse each other for having rejected the Divine Message. But this mutual recrimination and condemnation proves of no avail.

Towards its close the *Sūra* refers to a criterion by which it could be easily found out that the Holy Prophet is neither an impostor nor a maniac. He is a true Prophet of God, because an impostor is never allowed to progress and prosper and eventually comes to a sad end, and a madman cannot bring about such a wonderful revolution in the life of a whole people as the Holy Prophet has done. The *Sūra* ends with the warning to disbelievers of Mecca to take a lesson from the fate of the opponents of Prophets of yore, who in pride of power and position, rejected the Divine Reformers and were consequently destroyed. If the Meccan disbelievers rejected the Message of Islam they, too, would meet with no better fate.

سُورَةُ السَّابِّ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٣٣)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³¹³⁰

2. All praise is due to Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And His is all praise in the Hereafter; and He is the Wise, the All-Aware.³¹³¹

3. ^bHe knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes forth from it, and whatever descends from the heaven and whatever ascends into it; and He is Merciful, Most Forgiving.³¹³²

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ②

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا

يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ

الْغَفُورُ ③

^aSee 1 : 1.

^b57 : 5.

3130. Commentary :

See 1:1.

3131. Commentary :

Five Chapters of the Qur'ān i.e., 1st, 6th, 18th, 35th and the present one, begin with the words "All praise is due to Allah." All these Chapters, expressly or by implication, deal with the subject of the Lordship, Almightyness and Majesty of God. The preceding several Chapters embodied prophecies about the rise, progress and the ultimate victory of Islam over false Faiths. In the present *Sūra*, however, the Muslims are warned that they should be on their guard against falling into bad ways. God being the Lord of all the worlds, He has no relation with any particular people and so if they followed evil ways as did the Israelites in the time of Solomon, all their power and glory will vanish and like the Israelites they will fall a victim to misery, degradation and ruin.

The words "His is praise in the Hereafter" refer to the time when Islam again will become triumphant after its decline. A detailed reference to this has been made in 32 : 6.

3132. Commentary :

This verse consists of four clauses. The first clause, "whatever goes into the earth" corresponds to the third clause, viz., "whatever descends from the heaven;" and the second clause, "and whatever comes forth from it," corresponds to the fourth clause, "whatever ascends into it." The allusion in this verse is to the subject dealt with in 32 : 6. The verse signifies that it is God alone Who knows what kind of teaching is needed in a particular age. Similarly, it is He Who knows when to take back to heaven the teaching which had descended from it, after it has been corrupted by the people, just as He takes water back to heaven in the form of vapours after it becomes corrupt, and sends it down in a purified form in the shape of rain.

4. And those who disbelieve say, 'The Hour will never come upon us'. Say, 'Yea, by my Lord Who knows the unseen, it will surely come upon you. "Not an atom's weight in the heavens or in the earth or anything less than that or greater escapes Him, but *all is recorded* in a perspicuous Book,"³¹³³

5. ^bThat He may reward those who believe and do good works. It is these who will have forgiveness and an honourable provision.³¹³⁴

6. ^cBut *as to* those who strive against Our Signs, seeking to frustrate *Our plans*, it is they for whom there will be the suffering of a painful punishment.

قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَ
يَأْتِيَنَا بَعْدَ غَيْرِ مَا نَحْسَبُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْفَرُ
رُزْقُهُمْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغَرُ مِنْ
ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرُ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ٣١٣٣

يَجْزِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ٣١٣٤

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
مِّن رَّجْزٍ أَلِيمٌ ٣١٣٥

^a10 : 62. ^b10 : 5; 30 : 46. ^c22 : 52; 34 : 39.

The words "whatever comes forth from it, and whatever descends from the heaven" may refer to the Word of God which is cast away by the people and is corrupted by them and then is taken up to heaven so that it may descend on earth in a purified state.

The words, "whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes forth from it," may also signify that whatever man shall sow, so shall he reap. Good actions produce good results and bad deeds lead to evil consequences.

The verse may also signify that God is aware of every phenomenon and every event, including the rise and fall of nations and peoples.

3133. Commentary :

The reference in the word "Hour" is to the hour of the triumph of Islam and the defeat and discomfiture of disbelief.

The subject of the preceding verse is further elaborated and developed in the present one, viz., that no action good or bad goes unrewarded. The disbelievers are thus warned that their opposition to Islam and their persecution of Muslims will not go unpunished.

3134. Commentary :

This and the next verse constitute a further elaboration of the subject of the preceding verses, viz., the immutable law of cause and effect.

"Forgiveness" in the verse corresponds to the Divine attribute "Forgiving" and "honourable provision" corresponds to "Merciful" in v. 3. The words "forgiveness" and "honourable provision" have been placed in order of precedence, for مغفرة (forgiveness) always precedes رحمة (mercifulness).

7. "And those who are given knowledge see that whatever has been revealed to thee from thy Lord is the truth, and *that it* guides unto the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy.

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ

الْحَمِيدِ ④

8. And those who disbelieve say, 'Shall we show you a man who will tell you *that* when you are broken up into pieces, you shall be *raised as a new creation*?³¹³⁵

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَذُكُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ

إِذَا مُرِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَرِّقٍ إِنَّا كُمْ لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ⑤

9. 'Has he forged a lie against Allah or is he afflicted with madness?' Nay, ^bbut those who believe not in the Hereafter are *already* suffering from the punishment and are too far gone in error.

أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلَالِ الْبَعِيدِ ⑥

^a13 : 20; 22 : 55; 35 : 32; 47 : 3; 56 : 96.

^b17 : 11; 27 : 5.

3135. Important Words :

مزق (you are broken up) is derived from مزق which means, he scattered or dispersed. مزق الثوب means, he tore the cloth in many places. مزق عرضه means, he rent or marred his honour or reputation. They say مزق كل مزقهم *i.e.* he dispersed them to all parts of the country. He (God) destroyed them thoroughly and completely (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In verse 4 disbelievers were warned that the time of the triumph of Islam and their own destruction was fast approaching. The word used in that verse to convey this warning was الساعة (the Hour). In the verse under comment

the disbelievers are shown as vainly seeking to divert the subject of their defeat by pretending to take the word الساعة (the Hour) in the sense of the Day of Resurrection when they shall be broken up into pieces and not in the sense in which it has been used in v. 4. *viz.*, the day of their defeat and destruction in this world. The verse may also mean that disbelievers accuse the Holy Prophet of seeking to create a community of his own by causing discord and disharmony in their ranks, and implies the answer that these people who brag so much of their unity were never a united people. Their talk of unity is an empty talk and their charge that the Holy Prophet seeks to create disunity among them is altogether false and unfounded.

10. Do they not see what is before them and what is behind them of the heaven and the earth? "If We please, We could cause the earth to sink with them, or cause pieces of the sky to fall upon them. In that verily is a Sign for every repentant servant of Allah."³¹³⁶

أَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ تَشَاءُ نَحْنُفُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطُ
عَلَيْهِمْ كِسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ
مُّنِيبٍ ۝

2. 2 11. And certainly, We bestowed grace upon David from Us saying: ^b"O ye mountains, repeat the praises of Allah with him, and O birds, ye also." And We made the iron soft for him,³¹³⁷

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا يُجِبَالُ أَوِي مَعَهُ وَ
الطَّيْرَ وَالنَّالَهُ الْحَدِيدَ ۝

a6 : 66; 17 : 69; 67 : 17-18.

b21 : 80; 38 : 19-20.

3136. Commentary :

The verse under comment continues the theme of the preceding verses and purports to say that there are evident Signs in the heavens and the earth which constitute an unmistakable evidence of the fast approaching triumph of Islam and the downfall and disgrace of disbelievers. The words "We will make the earth sink with them" refer to the Signs of the earth; and the words "or cause to fall upon them a portion of the heaven" allude to Heavenly Signs. Undoubtedly, the manner in which the forces of darkness and disbelief were put to rout in their combat against Islam showed that the victory of Islam was due solely to Divine help and succour which came to Muslims in the nick of time.

3137. Important Words :

أَب (repeat the praises) is derived from أَبَ which means, he returned. أَبَ إِلَى اللَّهِ means, he returned to God from his sins, he repented. أَوَى means, he repeated or echoed the praises of God (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

As the principal theme of this Sūra is the

triumph of Islam and the great wealth, power and dominion that were to be given to Muslims, and as the might and splendour of the Israelites attained its zenith in the reigns of David and Solomon, so a somewhat detailed reference has been made in this Sūra to these two great Prophets and Kings in order, on the one hand, to tell Muslims that such great glory and splendour will come to them also, and, on the other, to warn them that if they did not behave properly and if they defied and violated Divine commandments and indulged in evil practices, they too will come to grief, as did the Israelites after Solomon's death, when all their power and glory departed, and they became pariahs among the nations.

For a detailed discussion of the subject as to how the mountains and the birds repeated the praises of God along with David see 21 : 80. Briefly, the word "mountains" signifies those mountain tribes which submitted to David, while the use of the word "birds" implies that David led large and powerful armies followed by flocks of birds which feasted upon the dead

12. *And We said*, 'Make thou full-length coats of mail, and make the rings of a proper measure. And do righteous deeds, surely I see all that you do.'³¹³⁸

13. "And to Solomon *We subjected* the wind; its morning course was a month's journey, and its evening course was a month's journey too. And We caused a fount of molten copper to flow for him. And of the Jinn were some who worked under him, by the command of his Lord. And *We said* that whosoever of them turned away from Our command, We would make him taste the punishment of burning fire."³¹³⁹

أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سَبِغَتٍ وَقَدَّرُ فِي السَّرْدِ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا
إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ⑫

وَأَسْلَمْنَا لَهِ الْعَيْنِ الْقَطْرُ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَمَنْ يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ
مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ⑬

^a21 : 82; 27 : 18; 38 : 37.

bodies of his vanquished foes. The words "birds" may also signify highly spiritual men or real birds which David used for carrying messages in time of war.

The expression "And We made the iron soft for him" shows that the art of making implements of war from iron had very much developed under David and he freely made use of it for making coats of mail as the next verse shows.

3138. Important Words :

سابغات (full length coats of mail) is the plural of سابغة. درع سابغة means, a coat of mail that is wide or ample and long or such that one drags upon the ground by reason of its length and ampleness. نعمة سابغة means, a complete or full boon (Lane & Aqrab).

سرد (rings) is substantive noun from سرد (sarada) which means, he put the thing forward from one stage to another in regular order and uninterruptedly; he made it consecutive, successive or uninterrupted. سرد في الدرع means, he fabricated the coat of armour by inserting

the rings into one another. سرد الحديث means, he related uninterruptedly and well the tradition or narrative (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The reference in this verse is again to David's military might. The words "and do righteous deeds" embodied an admonition to the people of David that they were not to exult in their military conquests. Their main and principal object should be to preach and practise goodness. The implied admonition is meant for Muslims.

3139. Important Words :

راح (evening course) is derived from راح which means, he went or journeyed or worked. They say راح اليهم i.e. he went to them or he went to them in the evening; or did a thing in the evening or in the afternoon; he went or journeyed at any time. الرواح is the going or journeying in the last or latter part of the day; or the going or journeying at any time of the day or night. ربح means, the wind; a good

or pure thing; mercy; aid against an enemy; victory or conquest; predominance and power; a turn of good fortune (Lane & Aqrab). See also 8: 47.

Commentary :

The verse speaks volumes for the vast extent of Solomon's dominions and the peace and prosperity which reigned in his empire. Solomon's dominions extended from northern Syria along the coast of the eastern Mediterranean down to the Red Sea, along the Arabian Sea and up to the Persian Gulf. In fact, in Solomon's time, the Israelite empire had reached its zenith in wealth, power and prestige as the word *رج* which, among other things, means power and conquests, used in the verse, shows. The verse also shows that Solomon possessed a large mercantile navy:

And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents and brought it to King Solomon (1 Kings, 9 : 26-28).

Solomon's foreign alliances formed the basis for foreign commercial relations. From the Egyptians he bought chariots and horses, which he sold to the Hittites and other people of the north. With the Phoenicians he united in maritime

commerce, sending out a fleet once in three years from Ezion-geber. at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, to Ophire, presumably on the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. From this distant port, and others on the way, he derived fabulous amounts of gold and tropical products. These revenues gave him almost unlimited means for increasing the glory of his capital city and palace, and for the perfection of his civil and military organizations (Jew. Enc. vol. xi, p. 437).

The words, "And We caused a fount of molten copper to flow for him." signify the high stage to which industry and craftsmanship had developed under Solomon. He had erected factories in which copper was molted. In the Bible we have :

Moreover, he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof and ten cubits the height thereof. Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass and the height thereof was five cubits (II Chronicles 4 : 1-2).

The expression, "And of the Jinn were some who worked under him" shows that Solomon had conquered and pressed into service wild and rebellious mountain tribes who worked for him day and night. Incidentally, the verse shows that Solomon's rule was firm and strong. A reference to this is also to be found in the Bible in II Chronicles. 2 : 18.

14. They made for him what he desired, of palaces and statues, and basins like reservoirs, and large cooking vessels fixed in their places. *And We said:* "Work ye, O House of David, gratefully;" but few of My servants are grateful.³¹⁴⁰

15. And when We decreed his (Solomon's) death, nothing indicated to them that he was dead save a worm of the earth that ate away his staff. So when he fell down, the Jinn plainly realized that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in a state of degrading torment.³¹⁴¹

يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبٍ وَتَمَاثِيلَ وَجِفَانٍ

كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رُسِيَّتٍ اِعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٣١٤٠﴾

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَى مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا

دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنْسَاتَهُ فَلَئِمَّا خَرَّتْ بَيِّنَاتٍ

الْجِنُّ أَن لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبِ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي

الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿٣١٤١﴾

21 : 81.

3140. Important Words :

محارِب (palaces) is the plural of محراب which among other things means, a palace; a mosque (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 38.

جفان (basins) is the plural of جفنة which is infinitive noun from جفن. They say جفن الناقة i.e. he slaughtered the she-camel and gave the flesh for food to the people in bowls. جفنة means, a large bowl or receptacle, particularly used for food; a small well; a generous man. جفنة غراء means, a generous man who entertains many guests and feeds many. He is so called because people are fed by him in the جفنة (Lane & Aqrab).

جواب (reservoirs) is the plural of جابية which is derived from جبا. They say جبا الخراج i.e. he collected the tribute. جبا الماء في الحوض means, he collected the water in the pond. جواب is the plural of جابية which means, a large watering-trough in which water is collected for camels, a water reservoir; a company of men (Lane & Aqrab).

راسيات (fixed) is the plural of راسية which is derived from رسا which means, it was or became fixed, firm, stable. قدر راسية means, a cooking pot that will not be removed from its place on account of its large size and heaviness. جبال راسية means, firm mountains (Lane & Aqrab). See also 16 : 16.

Commentary:

The verse shows that besides being a highly prosperous, powerful and civilized monarch, Solomon was the prince of builders among Israelite rulers. He had a special taste for architecture which had greatly developed under him. The Temple of Jerusalem bears an eloquent testimony to his fine architectural taste.

3141. Important Words :

منساة (staff) is derived from نسا. They say نسا الدابة i.e. he urged or drove the beast. منساة means, a staff or large stick, so called because a beast is driven with it; a pastor's big staff (Lane & Aqrab).

16. "There was indeed a Sign for Saba' in their home-land—two gardens, *one* on the right hand and *one* on the left; and *We said to them*, 'Eat of the provision of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land and a Most Forgiving Lord!'"³¹⁴²

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ آيَةٌ ۖ جَنَّتَيْنِ عَنْ يَمِينٍ
وَشِمَالٍ ۚ كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ
كَتَبَتْهُ رَبُّنَا غَفُورٌ ﴿١٦﴾

^a16 : 113.

Commentary :

The reference in the words "a worm of the earth" is to Solomon's worthless son and successor, Rehoboam, under whose weak rule the great and mighty kingdom of Solomon fell to pieces. Besides leading a life of ease and luxury, he was surrounded by foolish and selfish counsellors whose bad advice led him to pursue a policy which brought about the ruin and downfall of the kingdom which had been reared on firm and sound footing by his great father. The wild mountain tribes realizing that the strong hand which had held them under subjection was no more, rebelled and revolted, with the result that disorder and chaos followed and Solomon's mighty kingdom cracked and crumbled. See I Kings, Chaps. 12, 13, 14 & Jew. Enc. under "Rehoboam."

The expression "that ate away his staff," signifies that the disruption and disintegration of Solomon's kingdom set in in Rehoboam's time.

3142. Commentary :

The preceding verses having made a mention of the blessings and favours which God had bestowed upon the Israelites and which found their fullest expression in the highly prosperous reigns of David and Solomon, the present verse proceeds to refer to another very prosperous and happy people of their time—the people of Saba'. Saba', as is mentioned under 27 : 23, was a city of Yemen situated about

three days' journey from Ṣan'ā', also called Ma'ārib.

This town finds frequent reference in the Old Testament and in Greek, Roman and Arabic literature, especially in the South Arabian inscriptions. The Sabaeans were a highly civilized and prosperous people. The finds made in the country itself are in harmony with the various classical literary sources, which agree in showing that the Sabaens attained the greatest importance of all Arab peoples of the pre-Muhammadan period, in particular of the four leading peoples of South Arabia who were known even to the Greeks...these still extant monuments of the once highly developed civilization, to which Sabaea mainly owed its historical importance...Agatharchides's remarks on the splendid buildings of the kings and private individuals in Saba' and the descriptions of Sabaean castles by the Arabs are confirmed by the testimony of the inscriptions, which to a great extent commemorate the building of houses (palaces) and fortifications. Of public works built to assist agriculture like barriers and dams, the most celebrated was the dam of Ma'ārib" (Enc. of Islam, vol. 4, p. 16).

Tirmidhī quotes a tradition on the authority of Farwah bin Mālik that when asked whether Saba' was the name of a land or of a woman, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said, 'It is neither the name of a land nor that of a woman but the name of a man in Yemen who had ten sons. Six of them remained in Yemen while four of them went to

17. But they turned awny; ^aso We sent against them a fierce flood. And We gave them, in lieu of their gardens, two gardens bearing bitter fruit and tamarisk and a few lote-trees.³¹⁴³

فَاعْرَضُوا فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ
بِجَنَّاتِهِمْ جَنَّاتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِىْ اُكْلٍ خَاطِطٍ وَّاَثَلٍ وَشَىْ

مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيْلٍ ۝۱۷

18. Thus We requited them because of their ingratitude; and none do We requite *in this manner* but the ungrateful.³¹⁴⁴

ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا وَّهَلْ نُجْزِىْ اِلَّا الْكَافِرُوْنَ ۝۱۸

^a16 : 113.

Syria. As for those who made Syria their home, they were Joham, Ghassān and Amila; and as for those who stayed back in Yemen they were Ash'ariyyun, Himyar, Kandah, Madhpih and 'Āmmār. On being asked who were Āmmār, the Prophet replied "Of them are Khath'am and Bajilah" (Tāj).

The whole tenor of the verse shows that the Sabaeans were a highly prosperous and cultured people whom God had blessed in great abundance with all the comforts and amenities of life. The whole country seems to have been rendered very fertile by dams and other irrigation works and was full of gardens and streams.

According to Muir there were 70 stages or stops from Ḥaḍarmaut to Aila on the road from Yemen to Syria. These stages even exist today. It was a very frequented and safe route, flanked on both sides by shady trees.

3143. Important Words :

سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ (fierce flood). سَيْلٌ is derived from سَالَ which means, it (the water) flowed. سَيْلٌ means, a torrent, a flow of water; much water or a collection of rain-water flowing in a valley or water course. مَاءٌ سَيْلٌ means, flowing or running water. عَرِمٌ is derived from عَرِمَ ('arama or 'aroma) which means, he was or became evil in disposition; he behaved insolently or he was

or became corrupt. عَرِمٌ means, a dam or dams constructed in valleys or torrent-beds; or a torrent of which the rush is not to be withstood; or violent rain (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Such is the irony of human circumstances that whenever man is blessed with material comforts and amenities of life and leads a prosperous and successful life, then instead of being grateful to God for His blessings and favours, he becomes arrogant and begins to behave ungratefully and insolently. The Sabaeans were no exception to the common run of humanity. In the day of prosperity they fell into evil ways and defied and broke Divine laws. The inevitable nemesis seized them. The same dam of Ma'ārib to which they owed all their wealth and prosperity caused their destruction. As the result of a mighty flood it burst and inundated the whole area causing wide-spread ruin. A land full of beautiful gardens, streams and great works of art was turned into a vast waste. The dam was about two miles long and 120 ft. high. It was destroyed about the first or second century A.D. (Palmer).

3144. Commentary :

This is how the ungrateful and the wicked are punished and the mighty are laid low. The verse constitutes a standing warning to Muslims

19. And We placed, between them and the towns which we had blessed, *other* towns that were prominently visible, and We fixed easy stages between them *and said*: 'Travel in them by night and day in security.'³¹⁴⁵

20. But they said, 'Our Lord, place longer distances between *the stages of* our journeys.' And they wronged themselves; so We made them bywords and We broke them into pieces, an utter breaking up. In that verily are Signs for every steadfast and grateful person.³¹⁴⁶

21. And Iblis indeed found true his judgment concerning them, so they followed him, *all* except a party of believers.³¹⁴⁷

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا

قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ سِيرُوا فِيهَا

لَيْلًا وَآيَاتًا أَمِينِينَ ①٩

فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَرَقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مِرْقٍ إِنْ فِي

ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ②٠

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا

فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ②١

to be on their guard against ingratitude and defiance of Divine commandments.

3145. Commentary :

The words "the towns which we had blessed" refer to the towns of Palestine, the seat of Solomon's government with which the Sabaeans carried on prosperous trade.

قرى ظاهرة meaning towns situated so near to each other as to be easily visible; well known or prominent towns; towns situated on high ground, the verse shows that the route from Yemen to Palestine and Syria was very frequented, safe and prosperous and was densely populated and the towns in the way were situated so close to each other as to be easily visible.

3146. Commentary :

The words shown as spoken by the people of Saba' in the verse were not actually spoken by

them but are used to describe their actual condition when they defied and disobeyed Divine commandments and consequently fell on evil days. The prosperous and frequented route became deserted, and desolate. The words "place longer distances between the stages of our journey" signify that because many towns on the route fell into ruin, the distance between one stage to the other became much longer and less safe.

The expression "and so We made them bywords" means that the Sabaeans were so utterly destroyed that no sign or mark was left of them. They became only a subject for story-tellers.

3147. Commentary :

The verse means to say that by their evil deeds the people of Saba' justified Satan's estimate that he would be successful in leading them astray. The reference to this estimate of Satan about the wicked people and their

22. "And he had no power over them, but *it was so* that We might distinguish those who believed in the Hereafter from those who were in doubt about it. And thy Lord is Watchful over all things.³¹⁴⁸

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتُوبُ
بِالْآخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ وَرَبُّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ حَفِيزٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

- 3 23. Say, ^b'Call upon those whom you assert *to be gods* beside Allah. They control not *even* the weight of an atom in the heavens or in the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor has He any helper among them'.³¹⁴⁹

قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ
فِيهَا مِنْ شَرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ ظَهِيرٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. "No intercession avails with Him, except for him about whom He permits *it*, until when their hearts are relieved of fright they would say, 'What is it that your Lord said?' They (the Messengers) will answer, 'The truth.' And He is the High, the Great.³¹⁵⁰

وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ حَتَّى
إِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا
الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٤﴾

^a15 : 43; 16 : 100. ^b17 : 57; 25 : 4. ^c2 : 256; 20 : 110; 78 : 39.

evil deeds may be found in 17: 63 where he is mentioned as saying that he will cause his (Adam's) progeny to perish except a few.

3148. Commentary :

The verse clearly and positively removes all doubts or misgivings as to the extent of the authority and control of Satan over men. According to it Satan has definitely no authority over man. It is by his own wrong beliefs and evil deeds that man brings about his spiritual ruin.

3149. Commentary :

As stated above, the principal theme of this *Sūra* is the triumph of Islam. Instances of David and Solomon on the one hand and of the Sabaeans on the other given in the preceding few verses embodied a prophecy that Muslims

would also be blessed with power and wealth like the Israelites in the reigns of David and Solomon and the Sabaeans but if they did not believe and were ungrateful to God, they would be punished like them. In the present verse, however, disbelievers are challenged to call upon all their false gods to arrest or retard the progress and advance of Islam and are told that they cannot do so; in fact, no power on earth can stop the new Faith from spreading.

3150. Important Words :

فزع (relieved of fear) is derived from فزع (*fazi'a*) which means, he feared, or became afraid of. فزعه (*fazza'-hī*) means, he frightened him. فزعه عنه means, he removed fear or fright from him (Lane & Aqrab).

25. Say, "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" Say, 'Allah. Either We or you are on right guidance or in manifest error.'³¹⁵¹

26. Say, 'You will not be questioned as to our sins, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do.'

27. Say, 'Our Lord will bring us all together; then He will judge between us with truth: and He is the Great Judge, the All-Knowing.'³¹⁵²

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ

وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

قُلْ لَا تَسْأَلُونَنَا عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نَسْأَلُكُمْ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ

الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

410 : 32; 27 : 65; 35 : 4.

Commentary :

The verse signifies that when punishment is decreed for a people on account of their evil deeds, no intercession can avail them.

The words "their hearts" may signify "the hearts of the intercessors" and the pronoun "they" in the words "they would say" refers to the sinful people who will be punished, and the second "they" in the expression "they will answer, 'the truth'" to the intercessors or to the Messengers of God. Or the words "their hearts" may refer to the hearts of disbelievers and the pronoun "they" to them in both the sentences. In such a case the verse would mean that when the curtain will be lifted from the eyes of disbelievers and reality will dawn on them in its naked form, they will say to themselves that what God had said through His Messengers was true.

3151. Commentary :

The fact that the Qur'an itself answers the question "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" by saying that it is Allah Who does so, shows that there could possibly

be no other answer to this question except the one here given by the Qur'an.

The words, "Either we or you are on right guidance or in manifest error," mean that as surely we (the believers) are on the right, so surely you (the disbelievers) are in error.

3152. Important Words :

فتح (the Great Judge) is derived from فتَحَ. They say فتَحَ بينهم i.e. he judged between them. فتاح الباب means, he opened the door. فتاح means, Judge. الفتاح is an epithet applied to God meaning, the Great Judge; the Opener of the gates of His Mercy and of sustenance to His servants (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse is generally taken as referring to the Fall of Mecca when it was decided beyond the shadow of doubt as to which of the two parties—Muslims and disbelievers—was "on right guidance" and which "in manifest error." It was after that great victory that a union of hearts was brought about between Muslims and their adversaries, the latter having given up their false beliefs and doctrines joined the fold of Islam. The use of the expression يجمع بيننا in

28. Say, "Show me those whom you have joined with Him as partners. Nay! *you cannot do so*, for He is Allah, the Mighty, the Wise."³¹⁵³

قُلْ أَرُونِي الَّذِينَ أَحَقُّهُمْ بِهِ شُرَكَاءَ كَلَّا بَلْ هُوَ
اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. ^bAnd We have not sent thee but as a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner for all mankind, but most men know not.³¹⁵⁴

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا
لَّكِن أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. 'And they say, 'When will this promise be *fulfilled*, if you are truthful?'

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Say, 'For you is the promise of a day from which ^ayou cannot remain behind a single moment nor can you get ahead *of it*.'³¹⁵⁵

قُلْ لَّكُمْ مِيعَادُ يَوْمٍ لَا تَسْتَأْخِرُونَ عَنْهُ سَاعَةً
وَلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

^a35 : 41; 46 : 5.

^b21 : 108.

^c21 : 39; 36 : 49; 67 : 26.

^d7 : 35; 10 : 50.

preference to the expression يجمعنا points to this union of the hearts. The verse thus constitutes a prophecy about the Fall of Mecca. It may also refer to the Battle of Badr when for the first time Muslims and the Quraishite army were brought together.

3153. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that on the day of the Fall of Mecca it will be decisively established that the false gods of disbelievers were devoid of all power and wisdom and that Allah, the God of Islam, was All-Powerful and Wise.

3154. **Commentary :**

The Holy Prophet has been repeatedly

declared in the Qur'ān as having been sent as a Messenger to all mankind till the end of time. See also 21:108 & 25:2. The Message of Islam is a universal message and the Qur'ān is the last revealed Book for all mankind. No other revealed Book or religion has ever laid claim to finality.

3155. **Commentary :**

If v. 27 above is taken as referring to the Battle of Badr, the word يوم (day) in the present verse would signify 'a year'. The Battle of Badr was fought in about a year after the Hijra.

- 4 32. And those who disbelieve say, 'We will never believe in this Qur'an, nor in what is before it,' and couldst thou see "when the wrongdoers will be made to stand before their Lord, throwing back the blame one to another. Those who were considered weak will say to those who were proud, 'Had it not been for you, we should surely have been believers.'³¹⁵⁶

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَلَا
بِالَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ مَوْقُوفُونَ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ الْقَوْلَ
يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لَوْلَا أَنْتُمْ
لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. ^bThose who were proud will say to those who were considered weak, 'Was it we that kept you away from the guidance, after it had come to you? Nay, it was you yourselves who were guilty.'

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا أَنْحُنْ
صَدَدْنَاكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ ۖ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ
مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^a7 : 39; 14 : 22; 28 : 64 ; 33 : 68; 40 : 48.

^b7 : 40; 14 : 22; 28 : 64; 40 : 49.

3156. Commentary :

The expression بين يديه literally meaning "between his two hands" is used in the sense of "before him or it." It has been used in this sense in 5 : 47 and 46 : 22. But it is also used in the sense of "in his presence" as in v. 13. Sometimes, however, this expression refers to a thing which is yet to come. In this sense the expression الذى بين يديه may mean 'the revelation which is yet to come.'

It is human nature that when a guilty person is face to face with the punishment of his guilt, he tries to excuse himself by seeking to shift the responsibility for his misdeeds to another person. It is to this aspect of human nature that reference has been made in this and the next two verses. In these verses the deceivers and the deceived are shown as engaging in mutual recrimination when they see punishment overtaking them, seeking to throw the responsibility of their disbelief one upon another.

34. "And those who were considered weak will say to those who were proud, 'Nay, but it was *your* scheming night and day, when you bade us disbelieve in Allah and set up equals unto Him.' ^bAnd they will conceal *their* remorse when they see the punishment; and We shall put chains round the necks of those who disbelieved. They will not be requited but for what they did.'³¹⁵⁷

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ
الْأَيْلِ وَالتَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَنَا أَنْ نَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ
لَهُ أُنْدَادًا وَأَسْرُوا التَّدَامَةَ لَنَا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَ
جَعَلْنَا الْأَغْلَلَ فِي آعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَهْلُ يُحْزُونَ
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And We never sent a Warner to any city but 'the wealthy ones thereof said, 'Surely, we disbelieve in what you have been sent with.'³¹⁵⁸

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا
إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. And they say, 'We have more wealth and children; and we shall not be punished.'³¹⁵⁹

وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

^a14 : 22; 40 : 48; ^b10 : 55 : ^c6 : 124; 17 : 17.

3157. Important Words :

أَسْرُوا (will conceal). أسر is one of those Arabic words which have contrary meanings. أسره means, he concealed it; he manifested it, he made it known (Lane). See also 10 : 55.

أَعْنَاق (necks) is the plural of عُنُق ('unuqun) which is substantive noun from عَنَق ('anīqa) which means, he was or became long and thick in the neck. عُنُق means, the neck; a company of men or a numerous company of men; the heads or chiefs of men or great ones. عُنُق النخل means, the trunks of palm-trees (Lane & Aqrab).

3158. Commentary :

The Prophets of God come to raise depressed and suppressed humanity to their rightful place in society and to restore to them the rights

which are denied to them by the vested interests. That is why in all ages it is the rich, the wealthy, the men of power and influence—the vested interests—who range themselves against the new Divine Message. They feel that under its influence the oppressed and the exploited people will come to realize their true position and, therefore, will refuse to be exploited any more. Hence they fight their Prophet tooth and nail and put all sorts of obstacles and impediments in his way.

3159. Commentary :

All opposition to truth on the part of disbelievers springs from pride and arrogance, based on their wealth and power, their prestige, position and numbers.

37. Say, 'Verily, ^amy Lord enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases, and straitens *it for whomsoever He pleases*; but most men do not know.'³¹⁶⁰

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَكِنَّ
بِغَيْرِ أَكْثَرِ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ^{٣٧}

5 38. And it is not your wealth nor your children that will bring you near Us in rank but ^bthose who believe and do good works, will have a double reward for what they did. ^cAnd in lofty mansions will they be secure.³¹⁶¹

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا
زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ۖ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ
جَزَاءٌ الضَّعِيفُ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ آمِنُونَ^{٣٨}

39. ^dAnd *as to* those who strive to frustrate *the purpose* of Our Signs, it is they who will be brought face to face with punishment.³¹⁶²

وَالَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي
الْعَذَابِ مُخَضَّرُونَ^{٣٩}

^a13 : 27; 29 : 63; 39 : 53; 42 : 13. ^b3 : 58; 6 : 49; 18 : 89; 19 : 61; ^c25 : 76. ^d22 : 52.

3160. Commentary :

The verse seems to hold out a promise to ~~those~~ who are looked down upon and are oppressed and exploited, that by accepting the new Message, they will become rich and powerful. In God's possession lie the treasures of the heavens and earth, and He has decreed that the poor and the down-trodden will now inherit the earth because they have accepted the Divine Message.

3161. Commentary :

The verse seeks to remove the assumption by disbelievers of fancied and false superiority based on wealth, power and position, referred to in v. 36 and means to say that these things

are not the means of achieving nearness to God. On the contrary, they tend to keep man away from Him. It is right belief and good actions which are his real wealth and which can bring him salvation and God's pleasure.

3162. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that God has decreed that the new Faith shall prosper and triumph and all the efforts and machinations of disbelievers to retard or arrest its onward march will prove futile. The disbelievers will not be able to frustrate God's purpose. On the contrary, their machinations will recoil on their own heads and they will be visited with Divine punishment.

40. Say, 'Surely, my Lord enlarges the provision for such of His servants as He pleases and straitens *it* for such of them *as He pleases*. And whatever you spend, He will replace it; and He is the Best of providers.'³¹⁶³

قُلْ إِنْ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَ
يَقْدِرُ لَهُ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَ
هُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

41. And *remember* 'the day, when He will gather them all together; then He will say to the angels: 'Was it you that they worshipped?'

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهَؤُلَاءِ
إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

42. They will say, ^b'Holy art Thou. Thou art our Protector against them. Nay, but they worshipped the Jinn; it was in them that most of them believed.'³¹⁶⁴

قَالُوا سُبْحَنَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّنَا مِنْ دُونِهِمْ بَلْ كَانُوا
يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

43. *It will be said to disbelievers:* 'So, this day, you will have no power either to profit or harm one another.' And We shall say to those who did wrong: "Taste ye the punishment of the Fire that you denied.'

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُلِيكَ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا
وَنَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ
بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a6 : 129; 10 : 29; 17 : 98; 19 : 69.

^b25 : 19. ^c8 : 15; 10 : 53; 22 : 23.

3163. Commentary :

The subject-matter of v. 37 is here repeated to emphasize the fact that disbelievers should not be misled by the present poverty and weakness of Muslims, as the latter are destined to inherit the kingdom of the earth because they have believed in the Message of God Who is the Owner and Controller of all the sources of wealth.

3164. Commentary :

The reference in the word *Jinn* is to the proud, wicked and ungodly people who are not the followers of any revealed religion and who have been spoken of in vv. 32, 33 and 34 above. The word may also mean hidden forces of evil, the root جن (*janna*) meaning, it veiled, concealed or covered (Lane).

44. And when Our manifest Signs are recited to them, they say, "This is but a man who seeks to turn you away from that which your fathers worshipped." And they say, 'This is but a forged lie.' And those who disbelieve say about the truth when it comes to them, 'This is nothing but clear magic.'³¹⁶⁵

وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا رَجُلٌ
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُكُمْ ۚ وَ
قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرًى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِلْحَقِّ لَنَا جَاءَ هُمْ ۚ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. And We gave them no Books which they studied nor did We send to them any Warner before thee.³¹⁶⁶

وَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ يَتَدَّبَّرُونَهَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ
مَبْلَكًا مِنْ نَذِيرٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

a17 : 95; 23 : 25.

3165. Commentary :

This verse sums up the subject-matter of the whole *Sūra*. The preceding verses deal with the mission of the Holy Prophet and answer the criticisms and objections of disbelievers against him. Their first objection was that the Prophet had split up the people into groups and parties and thus had sought to carve out of this chaos a new community for himself and to impose his leadership on them (v. 8). This objection was answered by a reference to the Divine practice that whenever there came a Prophet into the world, the people to whom he preached his Message naturally became split up into two hostile camps with the result that those who accepted it and followed the Prophet's lead triumphed over their opponents and became a strong community. To this the disbelievers would retort that the Prophet could not succeed in the face of their great resources, power and numbers (v. 36). When this objection was also refuted by the argument that power and wealth belonged to God and that it was not these things but right beliefs and good

actions that led to the success and prosperity of a people and that Muslims being righteous and holding right beliefs were destined to triumph over them (vv. 37-40), the disbelievers pretended to derive consolation from the false and flimsy plea that the Prophet could not succeed because three great factors worked towards his failure, viz., that he acted against the old traditions of their forefathers, that he was a liar and an impostor and that he employed unfair and deceitful means for the furtherance of his cause and held out false promises. It is to these three objections of disbelievers that the verse under comment refers.

3166. Commentary :

The verse answers all the objections mentioned in the preceding verse. It purports to say that disbelievers accuse the Holy Prophet of having defied and flouted the time-honoured traditions of their forefathers. This objection is answered by the question : "do they possess any Book which has come down to them from their forebears and which contains teachings opposed to the teachings of the Prophet?" It further says

46. And those who were before them *also* rejected *the truth*—and these have not attained *even* to a tenth of that which We gave them, but they treated My Messengers as liars. So *they shall see* how *terrible* are the *consequences of denying Me!*³¹⁶⁷

- 6 47. Say, 'I only exhort you to do only one thing: that you stand up before Allah in twos and singly and then reflect. *You will then realize that* "there is no insanity in your companion; he is only a Warner to you of an impending severe punishment."³¹⁶⁸

وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا بَلَغُوا مِئْشَارَ
مَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوا رُسُلِي فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ۝

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مِثْلَ
وَفَرَادَى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ۝

a7 : 185; 23 : 71.

that when no Prophet had come to their forefathers and they had received no revelation, then what value can their views and opinions possess as compared with the teachings of the Holy Prophet who claims to have been commissioned by God and to have received revelation direct from Him?

3167. Important Words :

معشار (a tenth) is derived from عشر ('ashara). They say عشر المال i.e. he took the tenth part of the property. عشرهم means, he took one from them, they being ten. عشر ('ushrun) and عشر and معشار all mean, a tenth; a tenth part; one of ten parts. Some say معشار means, a hundredth part, yet according to some others it means, a thousandth part (Lane).

Commentary :

This verse demolishes the second objection of the disbelievers. It means to say that if they are proud of their wealth, power and position and are rejecting the Message of Islam because of the weakness and poverty of the Holy Prophet and his followers, then they should know that peoples much more powerful than

they and possessing resources far in excess of theirs were destroyed when they rejected their Prophets. How do they then expect to escape Divine punishment by rejecting the Holy Prophet? They should know that they will fail against the Prophet, and their failure will prove that he is a true Prophet of God.

3168. Commentary :

In this and the next few verses another kind of argument has been suggested to test the truth of the Holy Prophet. The present verse recommends an objective and detached examination of his claim. The disbelievers are urged to ponder, dispassionately, without prejudice, and being uninfluenced by crowd mentality, whether the Holy Prophet suffers from insanity or unsoundness of mind. The Qur'an is convinced that if a person were to deliberate seriously and in solitude over the claim of the Holy Prophet, he would inevitably come to the conclusion that he is neither an impostor, nor an insane person, because an impostor is never allowed to progress and prosper, and sooner or later—sooner rather than later—he meets with a terrible end, while an insane person can neither give such excellent

48. Say, "Whatever reward I might have asked of you—let it be yours. My reward is only with Allah; and He is Witness over all things."³¹⁶⁹

49. Say, 'Truly, My Lord hurls the Truth at falsehood and breaks it into pieces. He is ^bthe Great Knower of the unseen.'³¹⁷⁰

50. Say, "The Truth has come, and falsehood could neither originate *any good* nor reproduce it."³¹⁷¹

51. Say, 'If I err, I err only against myself; and if I am rightly guided, it is because of what my Lord has revealed to me. ^aVerily, He is Hearing, Nigh.'

52. Couldst thou but see when they will be smitten with fear! Then there will be no escape, and they will be seized from a place nearby.³¹⁷²

قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا
عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝

قُلْ إِنْ رَبِّي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَـٰمُ الْغُيُوبِ ۝

قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِيُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ۝

قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ
فِيمَا يُؤْتِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ ۝

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِنْ مَّكَانٍ
قَرِيبٍ ۝

^a38 : 87; 42 : 24; 52 : 41; 68 : 47.

^b5 : 117.

^c17 : 82; 21 : 19.

^d2 : 187; 11 : 62.

teaching as does the Qur'an, nor can bring about such wonderful revolution in the life of a whole people, steeped in ignorance and immorality as had been brought about by the Holy Prophet.

3169. **Commentary :**

This verse answers the objection raised in (v. 8) viz., that, by his claim to prophethood, the Holy Prophet seeks to impose his leadership upon his people. It tells disbelievers that in calling men to God the Prophet is actuated by no selfish motives. He calls God to bear witness to the honesty and sincerity of his purpose. Besides this his whole life constitutes an unanswerable testimony to it.

3170. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that a further proof,

if proofs are still needed, to establish the truth of the claim of the Holy Prophet, is that truth shall triumph over falsehood and the Prophet shall succeed in his mission.

3171. **Commentary :**

The words ^aيعيد (nor could reproduce it) embody a mighty prophecy that idolatry will never regain a foothold in Arabia. It will disappear from that country for ever.

3172. **Commentary :**

The words "from a place nearby" may either refer to the battlefield of Badr or to the Fall of Mecca. The verse thus means that disbelievers will realize that they were in the wrong when they would sustain a crushing defeat at Badr or when their great citadel, Mecca, would fall to Muslim arms.

53. And they will say, 'We now believe therein.' But how can the attaining of faith be possible to them from a position so far-off,³¹⁷³

54. While they had disbelieved in it before? And they are uttering conjectures from a far off-place.³¹⁷⁴

55. And a barrier has been placed between them and that which they longed for, as was done with the likes of them before. They too were in disquieting doubt.³¹⁷⁵

وَقَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُمُ التَّائِبُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ
بَعِيدٍ ۝٥٣

وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَقْذِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ
مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ۝٥٤

وَجِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ
بِأَشْيَاءِهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُرِيبٍ ۝٥٥

3173. Commentary :

The words "from a position so far - off" may mean "after death." In this sense the verse would mean that disbelievers will surely realize after death that they were in the wrong.

3174. Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers are making foolish conjectures about the failure of the Prophet's mission. These conjectures being far removed from the source of "the unseen" or from reality, reason and truth are quite foolish and baseless.

3175. Important Words :

اشياعهم (the likes of them). اشياء is the plural

of شيعه which means, followers or helpers or partisans; any people that have combined in or for an affair. The Quranic expression كما فعل بأشياءهم means, as was done with the likes of them; of the same persuasion as they; of the people that have passed (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

There could be no greater frustration for man in life than that he should fail to achieve the object of his desire, and it is exactly this frustration that has always been the lot of the rejectors of God's Prophets in every age. The opponents of Islam are here told that like the rejectors of the Prophets of yore they will also utterly fail to realize their heart's desire—failure of the mission of the Holy Prophet.

CHAPTER 35

AL-FĀṬIR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

The *Sūra* takes its title from the Divine attribute *Fāṭir*, (Originator) mentioned in the second verse. This attribute sheds some light on the subject-matter of the *Sūra*, viz., that God has implanted in the human soul an irresistible hankering after Him, and that, being the Maker and Originator of the heavens and the earth, He has made adequate provision, not only for man's physical needs but for his moral and spiritual needs as well, and that this provision has been fully made in the Qur'ān. The Divine attribute 'Originator' may also imply a reference to the new order that was to come about through the teaching of the Qur'ān and the example of the Holy Prophet. The *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca, probably at the time at which its predecessor was revealed.

Towards the end of the preceding *Sūra* it was stated that when Divine punishment overtakes disbelievers and they find no way out of it, they begin to make loud professions of faith. But in reality their hearts are devoid of all belief because they possess no mental affinity with it. They have rejected the Message of the Holy Prophet outright without giving it serious consideration and now that punishment has descended upon them they have begun loudly to proclaim their faith.

The present *Sūra* begins with the subject that from time immemorial the Great and Wise God has been sending Teachings for the guidance of man. He chooses angels as mediums for the revelation of His will and for the conveyance of His Teachings. These Teachings differ in importance and scope, and, therefore, the angels who bring them, also differ in their God-given powers and attributes. Some of them have two wings, others have three and so on in an ascending order. The wings of angels represent their inherent powers and qualities and also the Divine attributes they manifest. The Qur'ān is the last and the greatest and most important of all revealed Scriptures, therefore, its revelation was naturally attended with angels having the largest number of wings.

Further, in the preceding *Sūra*, Muslims were told that like the Israelites they will be given wealth, power, prosperity and prestige and that if in the heyday of their glory and greatness they consigned God to oblivion and abandoned themselves to a life of luxury and ease they will draw upon their heads His wrath as did the Israelites before them. In the present *Sūra* they are promised honour and eminence through the Qur'ān whose commandments they should not fail to observe.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with the declaration that all praise belongs to God Who is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. The declaration implies that being the Creator of the universe God has not only provided for the physical needs of man but also for his moral and spiritual needs, and that for this purpose He has created angels through whose instrumentality He controls the physical universe and conveys His will to men. The *Sūra* further says that since, the creation of man God has been sending Prophets and Messengers to convey His will and that now He has decreed to bestow His mercy upon mankind in the form of the Qur'ān. After this announcement of the bestowal of Divine mercy upon man he has been warned not to reject it, as this will entail grave consequences. The subject further continues that whenever a Divine Messenger addresses his Message to his people, they become split up into two camps—those that accept the Divine Message and become heirs to God's blessings and mercy and those who reject His Prophet and incur His displeasure and come to grief. Further, the Holy Prophet is asked not to grieve over his being rejected by disbelievers, since by rejecting him they only injure their own souls and cannot frustrate God's purpose. The *Sūra* proceeds to draw a moral lesson from the quite insignificant beginnings of man, viz., that Islam too will, from a humble start, grow into a mighty organisation. It further compares Islam to a sea whose water is sweet and pleasant to drink and whose teachings slake the thirst of spiritual wayfarers. Next, it observes that Islam is no novel phenomenon. Alternate periods of spiritual light and darkness continue to come over the world as day follows night and *vice versa*. After a long period of darkness and cessation of revelation, the sun of Islam has risen to illumine the dark world and God has decreed to bring into being a new creation and a new order of things through its teachings. Through the Qur'ān God will give eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf and the dead will receive new life, but those who will deliberately shut the avenues of their hearts and refuse to listen to the Divine Call will incur spiritual death and will be like the dead in the graves. The *Sūra* further develops the subject of the continuity of revelation and says that the Holy Prophet is no new Messenger. There have been coming in the world, from time immemorial, Divine Messengers who called men to God. "There is no people," the *Sūra* says, "to whom a warner has not been sent."

The *Sūra* then invites attention to the study of the physical phenomenon which bears a striking resemblance to a similar phenomenon in the spiritual realm. When rain falls on dry and parched land, it begins to bloom, blossom and vibrate with new life, and many kinds of crops, flowers and fruits of varying colours, tastes, and forms, are brought forth. The water that comes down as rain is the same but the crops and fruits are different. Similarly, the same water of Divine revelation produces different results among men of different natures and moral aptitudes. While on the one hand it produces highly righteous and God-fearing men, on the other, a community of vicious and wicked men also comes into being who carry on a relentless fight against the cause of truth. This fight between the devotees of truth and the forces of darkness always ends only in one inevitable result—the triumph of truth over falsehood.

Towards its close the *Sūra* brings home to idolaters the untenability of their position. It asks them, why do they worship false gods who create nothing, in preference to the Almighty Creator of the universe, all parts of which work in perfect harmony? It is this Great God Who has revealed the Qur'ān and has sent the Holy Prophet. This is why the whole universe is working to further the cause of Islam. If, in spite of the falsity and futility of their beliefs, and practices, the disbelievers continued to stick to them, Divine punishment will overtake them, though God is very slow in punishing, and continues to grant respite to sinners till by their perverse attitude they shut upon themselves the doors of His mercy.

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٣٥)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³¹⁷⁶

2. All praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who employs the angels as messengers, having wings, two, three, and four. He adds to *His* creation whatever He pleases; for Allah has power over all things.³¹⁷⁷

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ
السَّالِكِينَ رَسُولًا أُولَىٰ أَجْنَحَةٍ مِّثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعٍ
يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ②

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b6 : 15; 12 : 102; 14 : 11; 42 : 12.

3176. Commentary :

See 1:1.

3177. Important Words :

اجنحة (wings) is the plural of جناح which is derived from جنح which means, he or it inclined, leaned or propended. They say جنح الطائر *i.e.* the bird contracted its wings to descend and approached like one falling and repairing to a place of refuge. جناح means, wing; hand; upper arm; edge; side; wing of an army; protection; refuge; power; inclination; assistant; a part or power of a thing. The Arabs say نحن على جناح السفر *i.e.* we are on the wings of journey, *i.e.* we are about to start on journey (Lane & Aqrab). See also 17 : 25.

Commentary :

The reference in this verse may be to the creation of two universes; the physical and the spiritual. God, it says, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them. He has created the angels to execute His will in the material universe. These angels are المديرات أمرا *i.e.* regulators of the

affairs of the world (79 : 6). To them is entrusted the control, management and supervision of affairs of the physical world. This is one duty and responsibility placed upon them. Their other and heavier duty is to carry God's commandments and will to His Messengers who are the bearers of the Divine revelation.

The verse may also indicate that a new spiritual Dispensation is being created through the revelation that is being sent down to the Holy Prophet. The angels bearing this revelation manifest two, three, four, attributes of God at the same time, and there may be others manifesting an even larger number of Divine attributes.

The word فاطر (Originator) has been used in the verse to draw attention to the fact that the Great Maker Who has made full provision for the physical needs of man could not have omitted to provide for his spiritual sustenance and development, and just as He has entrusted the control and management of the physical universe to the care of the angels, so has He entrusted

3. "Whatever of mercy Allah grants to men—there is none to withhold it; and whatever He withholds, there is none who can release it after that; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."³¹⁷⁸

مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا
وَمَا يُمْسِكُ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ

الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

4. O ye men, remember the favour of Allah *that He has bestowed* upon you. ^bIs there any Creator other than Allah *Who* provides for you from the heaven and the earth? There is none worthy of worship but He. Whither then are you turned away?

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ
مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٤﴾

5. "And if they reject thee, verily, God's Messengers have been rejected before thee; and unto Allah all matters are brought back *for decision*."³¹⁷⁹

وَإِنْ يَكْذِبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥﴾

^a11 : 108; 39 : 39.

^b10 : 32; 27 : 65; 34 : 25.

^c6 : 35; 22 : 43; 40 : 6; 54 : 10.

the regulation of the affairs of the spiritual world to them. They are the instruments to carry out God's will in both the universes.

As shown under "Important Words" above, the word *أجنحة* is a symbol of power and ability. In view of this significance of the word the expression *أولى أجنحة النخ* shows that angels possess powers and qualities in varying degrees and in accordance with the importance of the work entrusted to each one of them. Some of the angels are endowed with powers and qualities greater than the others. The Arch-angel Gabriel is the chief of all the angels and, therefore, the most important work of carrying Divine revelation to God's Messengers is entrusted to him and is done under his care and supervision.

3178. **Commentary :**

After having mentioned in the previous verse that God has created the heavens, and the earth and that He has made full provision for man's physical and spiritual needs and has entrusted the control and management of both the physical and spiritual worlds to the care of the angels, the verse under comment proceeds to say that God has now decreed to bestow His mercy upon mankind in the form of the revelation of the Qur'ān, at the same time warning the would-be enemies of truth that they will not be allowed to thwart God's plan and purpose as "He is the Mighty, the Wise!"

3179. **Commentary :**

After it has been mentioned in the preceding verses that a great Divine gift is about to be

6. O ye men, assuredly the promise of Allah is true, so let not the present life deceive you, nor let the Deceiver deceive you with respect to Allah.³¹⁸⁰

7. "Surely, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him for an enemy. He calls his followers only that they may become inmates of the burning Fire.

8. For those who disbelieve there is a severe punishment. And for those who believe and do good works there is forgiveness and a great reward.³¹⁸¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغَوْرُ ①

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو
حُزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ②

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ③

١
ع
١٣

② : 169; 12 : 6; 18 : 51; 20 : 118.

bestowed on mankind in the form of the Qur'ān and after the would-be rejectors have been warned not to hasten to reject it, the Holy Prophet is told in the present verse that he will be rejected, opposed and persecuted but this should not discourage or dismay him because his opposition and persecution would be no new thing as all the Divine Messengers and Prophets before him were also rejected, opposed and persecuted, but the enemies of truth could never frustrate God's plan but themselves always came to grief.

3180. Commentary :

It is really love of the world that leads man

to sin. This is why "the present life" has been mentioned in the verse before the mention of "the Deceiver" who is Satan. This shows that it is man himself who first becomes mentally corrupt and then Satan comes to deceive and lead him astray.

3181. Commentary :

The verse points to an invariable Divine law, viz., that whenever a Prophet of God comes into the world, the people to whom he preaches his Message become split up into two hostile camps: Those who accept God's Message and receive His blessings and those who having rejected and opposed him incur His displeasure and punishment.

R. 2 9. Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deed is made *to appear* pleasing, so that he looks upon it as good, *like him who believes and does good works*? Surely, Allah adjudges astray whom He will and guides whom He will. So let not thy ~~soul~~ waste away in sighing for them. ~~Surely~~, Allah knows what they do.³¹⁸²

10. And Allah is He Who sends the winds which raise the clouds; then do We drive them to a lifeless tract of land, and quicken therewith the earth after its death. Likewise *shall* the Resurrection be.³¹⁸³

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَاهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبُ
نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ^①

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَهُ إِلَى
بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذَلِكَ
النُّشُورُ^②

^a16 : 64; 27 : 25; 29 : 49.

^b22 : 7; 57 : 18.

3182. Commentary :

The words, "so let not thy soul waste away sighing for them," give an insight into the noble soul of the Holy Prophet—how anxious and eager he was to lead his people out of their evil ways and save them from the wrath of God.

Another verse of the Qur'ān, viz., "Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death for sorrow after them if they believe not in this discourse" (18:7), also constitutes an eloquent commentary on the solicitude and concern of the Holy Prophet for the spiritual well-being of his people and on his deep grief for their opposition to truth. But such is human ingratitude that from the very people for whom he felt and grieved so much he received nothing but abuse, invective and ridicule.

3183. Important Words :

نُشُور (Resurrection) is infinitive noun from نشر. They say نشر الخبر *i.e.* he spread or spread out or published the news. نشرت الأرض means, the land, being rained upon, its herbage or pasturage

became green after it had dried up. شر الله الموتى means, God raised the dead to life. نشر means raising the dead; Resurrection. The word has also been used in the sense of spiritual resurrection in this life (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In the Qur'ān the plural form رياح (winds) is generally used in good sense as in the present verse and in vv. 7 : 58; 25 : 49; etc., while the singular has been used to denote Divine punishment as in 17 : 70; 33 : 10; 41 : 17; 46 : 25; 51 : 42; 54 : 20 & 69 : 7. The word النشور (Resurrection) if taken to mean the resurrection of a people from a state of spiritual decline and degradation the verse would mean that just as dead and dry land blossoms into new life when rain falls upon it, so will a people, morally and spiritually dead and steeped in sin and wickedness as the Arabs are, rise to a new life through the means of the heavenly water of Divine revelation—the Qur'ān.

11. Whoso desires honour, *let him know that* all honour belongs to Allah. Unto Him ascend good words, and *as for* righteous work He exalts it, ^aAnd those who plot evils—for them is a severe punishment; and the plotting of such will perish.³¹⁸⁴

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ
يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ
وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَمَكْرُهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُوَ يُبَوِّرُ ⑪

12. ^bAnd Allah created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then He made you pairs. And no female conceives, nor does she bring forth *a child* save with His knowledge. And no one is granted long life who is granted long life, nor is anything diminished of his life, but *it is recorded* in a Book. That surely is easy for Allah.³¹⁸⁵

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ
وَمَا يُعْتَرِمْ مِنْ مَّعْتَرٍ وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ عُمرِهِ إِلَّا
فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ⑫

^a27 : 51; 52; 35 : 44.

^b18 : 38; 22 : 6; 23 : 14; 36 : 78; 40 : 68.

3184. Important Words :

يَبُور (will perish) is derived from بار which means, he perished; it (commodity) was or became difficult of sale. They say بارت السوق *i.e.* the market became dull. بار العمل means, the work became or proved vain. بوار means perdition, destruction. The Arabs say نزلت البوار على الكفار *i.e.* perdition overtook the disbelievers (Lane & Aqrab). See also 25 : 19.

Commentary :

The present verse continues the theme of its predecessor and proceeds to say that under the influence of the Holy Prophet, the Arabs will not only shed their evil ways and become paragons of piety and godliness but all honour and glory will also be theirs, and nations that now look down upon them and consider them beneath notice will bow down before them in humility. Their honour and glory will be the result

of their true beliefs, noble ideals, and righteous conduct.

The pronoun ه in the expression يرفعه may refer to العمل الصالح (righteous work). In that case the subject of the verb يرفع (exalts) is God, as shown in the text. Or it may refer to الكلم الطيب (good words). In that case the subject of the verb يرفع will be العمل الصالح (the righteous work).

3185. Commentary :

By referring to the very humble and insignificant origin of man the verse draws attention to the lowly beginnings of Islam and the extremely poor condition of the early Muslims and implies a prophecy that just as out of an insignificant sperm-drop there grows a well-proportioned and fully-developed human being, similarly the lowly and poor Muslims will one day grow into a mighty community.

13. And the two seas are not alike: this one palatable, sweet *and* pleasant to drink, and this *other* salt, bitter. "And from each you eat fresh meat, and take forth ornaments which you wear. And thou seest the ships therein ploughing *the waves* that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.³¹⁸⁶

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَيْنِ ۚ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ
شْرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِنْ كُلٍّ تَأْكُلُونَ
لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَ
تَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَازِيرَ لَبَتَعُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

^a16 : 15; 45 : 13.

The latter part of the verse relating to what a female conceives and what she gives birth to, and to the lengthening and diminishing of a man's life implies another prophecy that the progeny of opponents of the Holy Prophet will one day become devoted followers of Islam.

3186. Important Words :

عذب (palatable) is derived from عذب ('*adhiba*) which means, it was or became sweet; became easy and agreeable to be swallowed or drunk. انه لعذب means, sweet water. They say لعذب اللسان *i.e.* verily he is sweet of tongue (Lane & Aqrab). See also 25 : 54.

ملح (salt) is noun-infinitive from ملح (*malaha*). They say ملح الطعام *i.e.* he put salt in the food. ملح الماء means, the water became saltish. ملح (*maloha*) it (a thing) was or became beautiful or pretty (Lane & Aqrab). See also 25 : 54.

سائغ (pleasant) is derived from ساغ which means, it (beverage) was easy and agreeable to swallow (Lane). See also 16 : 67.

مواخر (ploughing the waves) is derived from

مخر. They say مخرت السفينة *i.e.* the boat clove the water with its stem and ran (Lane). See also 16 : 15.

For أجاج and فرات see 25 : 54.

Commentary :

Metaphorically, the two seas spoken of in this verse are true and false religions. The words عذب and أجاج may be taken as representing respectively true and false religions which cannot be equal. The one is like sweet water which is good to drink and slakes the thirst and is also very useful for irrigation, while the other is like bitter water which is not only not fit to drink but is also unusable for purposes of irrigation. The verse continuing the metaphor purports to say that though saltish water is not fit for drinking and irrigation, it has other uses. From the saltish sea-water come out fresh meat and ornaments. Similarly, though the present opponents of Islam are, like saltish water, bitter and worthless, yet out of their loins there will be born those who will be zealous and devout bearers of its Message.

14. "He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night. ^bAnd He has pressed into service the sun and the moon; each one runs *its* course to an appointed term. Such is Allah, your Lord; His is the kingdom, ^cand those whom you call upon beside Allah own not *even* a whit. ³¹⁸⁷

15. "If you call on them, they will not hear your call; and even if they heard it, they could not answer you. And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your having associated *them with God*. And none can inform thee like the *One Who is All-Aware*. ³¹⁸⁸

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ
وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُسَمًّى ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ ^{١٣}

إِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ وَكَوَسِعُوا مَا
اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بَشِرِكُمْ
وَلَا يُبَيِّنُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ ^{١٤}

^a22 : 62; 31 : 30; 57 : 7. ^b7 : 55; 13 : 3; 29 : 26; 31 : 20; 39 : 6. ^c13 : 15; 40 : 21. ^d7 : 194

3187. Important Words :

قِطْمِير (whit) means, the cleft of a date-stone or the integument that is upon it; the thin skin which is upon a date-stone between the stone and the date itself or the white point in the back of the date-stone from which the palm-tree grows forth. Hence a small, mean, paltry, contemptible thing. The Arabs say ما أصبت منه قِطْمِيرًا i.e. I did not receive anything from him.

Commentary :

The metaphor of the preceding verse is continued in this verse. The word النهار (day) here represents prosperity and power and الليل (night) signifies loss of these things combined with national decline and decadence. Taking the two words in this sense the verse implies a prophecy that with the advent of the Holy Prophet a new order will come into being. The nations which have hitherto enjoyed temporal and spiritual sovereignty will, if they rejected his Message, be debased and disgraced, and another

people which have till now been looked down upon as dregs and scum of humanity because of their faith, will be raised to the highest pinnacles of power and glory. All the forces of nature will combine to work for the success of the new order and the forces of darkness led by those whom the disbelievers call upon besides Allah will utterly fail to impede or obstruct its progress, because the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is God's Who has revealed the new Teaching and Who is its Protector and Guardian.

3188. Commentary :

The verse further dwells upon the complete failure of the forces of evil to arrest the progress of Islam. It says that the idols of idol-worshippers will prove entirely powerless and useless against the onward march of Islam.

The reference in the words, "the One Who is All-Aware," as the translation of the text shows, is to God. It may also be to the Holy Prophet when the word would mean, well-aware.

- R. 3 16. O ye men, ^ait is you who are dependant upon Allah, but Allah is He Who is Self-Sufficient, the Praise-worthy.³¹⁸⁹

17. ^bIf He please, He could destroy you, and bring a new creation *instead*.³¹⁹⁰

18. ^cAnd that is not difficult for Allah.

19. ^dAnd no burdened *soul* can bear the burden of another; and if a heavily laden *soul* call *another* to *bear* its load, naught of it shall be carried *by the other*, even though he be a kinsman. ^eThou canst warn only those who fear their Lord in secret and observe Prayer. And whoso purifies himself, purifies himself only to his own good; and to Allah shall be the return.³¹⁹¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ
الْغَنِيُّ الْحَيُّدُ^{١٩}

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ^{٢٠}

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ^{٢١}

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ
إِلَىٰ حِمْلِهَا لَا يَحْمِلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ
إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ
أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ
وَالِى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ^{٢٢}

^a47 : 39. ^b4 : 134; 6 : 134; 14 : 20. ^c14 : 21. ^d6 : 165; 39 : 8; 53 : 39. ^e36 : 12.

3189. Commentary :

The verse points to man's utter helplessness. He needs God's help every moment of his life. He needs it for his physical sustenance and he needs it for his spiritual sustenance and God, out of His unbounded grace and mercy, has made provision for both.

3190. Commentary :

The verse implies that God has decreed to bring into being a new creation, a new order through the Holy Prophet and "it is not at all difficult for Him to do so."

3191. Important Words :

ثَقُلَ (heavily laden soul) is derived from ثَقُلَ which means, it was or became heavy, weighty

or ponderous; it was or became heavy, weighty or preponderant ideally; he was or became slow, lazy, wanting in activity or intelligence. ثَقُلَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ means, her pregnancy became apparent. أَثْقَلَ means, he overburdened him. ثَقُلَ of which ثَقُلَ is feminine gender means, heavily burdened or burdened beyond his power; overburdened; weighed down or oppressed by disease, debt, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 4:41.

Commentary :

The word وَزَرَ may here signify the burden of duty or responsibility; or it may mean the remorse or shame which a person feels when he commits a sin or crime. Taking it in the first sense, the expression لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى would mean that the personal duty or responsibility of one

20. ^aNot alike are the blind and the seeing;³¹⁹²

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ^{٢٠}

21. Nor the darkness and light,³¹⁹³

وَلَا الظُّلُمُتُ وَلَا النُّورُ^{٢١}

22. Nor the shade and heat.

وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ^{٢٢}

23. Nor alike are the living and the dead. Surely, Allah causes him to hear whom He pleases; and thou canst not make those to hear who are in the graves.³¹⁹⁴

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ^{٢٣}

^a11 : 25; 13 : 17; 40 : 59.

person cannot be shifted to, or discharged by another. Everyone has to carry his own cross. Taking the word in the second sense the expression cuts at the root of the doctrine of Atonement on which the whole fabric of Christianity stands. The verse purports to say that no person can relieve any other person of his grief or sorrow, or can share with him the remorse or regret that afflicts his conscience after he has committed a crime. Evidently as these feelings have their origin in the heart of man, they cannot be transferred to or shared by another person. The punishments of Hell are only the spiritual embodiments of man's evil actions done in this life and the person who committed the evil deeds quite clearly will not share these spiritual embodiments of his actions with another person who had not committed those evil deeds.

3192. **Commentary :**

Whenever a Prophet comes into the world the people to whom he preaches his Message become split up into two groups: (1) those who accept his Message and follow his lead; (2) those who reject and oppose him. These two groups of men are likened in the present verse to "the seeing" *i.e.* those who having been endowed

with spiritual eyes see the heavenly light, and "the blind" *i.e.* those who are afflicted with spiritual blindness as the result of their refusal to see the light. These two classes of men have been further likened to "the living" and "the dead" in verse 23 below. The believers have been called "the living" because by accepting the truth they receive new life, and the disbelievers are called "the dead" because by rejecting truth which is the elixir of life eternal they bring spiritual death upon themselves.

3193. **Commentary :**

In this and the next verse truth and falsehood have been respectively compared to light and pleasantness of the cool shade, and to darkness and scorching heat. There could be no better description of truth and falsehood than this.

3194. **Commentary :**

The words "who are in the graves" apply to the spiritually dead disbelievers. The verse means to say that it is not possible for a Prophet of God to make those who have deliberately shut their hearts and ears, to listen to and accept the Divine Message. Such people are spiritually as dead and defunct as those buried in the graves.

24. "Thou art only a Warner.

إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ③

25. ^bVerily, We have sent thee with the truth, *as* a Bearer of glad tidings and *as* a Warner; and ^athere is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent.³¹⁹⁵

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ
إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ④

26. ^aAnd if they treat thee as a liar, those who were before them *also* treated *their Messengers* as liars. Their Messengers came to them with ^cclear Signs, and with the Scriptures, and with the illuminating Book.³¹⁹⁶

وَإِنْ يَكْذِبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ
الْمُنِيرِ ⑤

27. Then I seized those who disbelieved, and how *terrible* were *the consequences* of denying Me!

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ⑥

^a11 : 13; 13 : 8. ^b2 : 120; 5 : 20; 1 : 189; 11 : 3; 25 : 57; 48 : 9. ^c10 : 48; 13 : 8;
16 : 37. ^d6 : 35; 22 : 43; 40 : 6; 54 : 10. ^e16 : 45.

3195. Commentary :

After mentioning that the Holy Prophet has been sent "as a Bearer of glad tidings and as a Warner" the verse proceeds to unfold a great truth which had remained unknown to the world till the Qur'ān revealed it. It says that it is not the Holy Prophet Muḥammad alone who has been sent as a Divine Messenger to call men to God but there had been sent to every people in the past a Heavenly Messenger who preached to them the same Message of truth and righteousness. This great and noble principle leads to the belief in the Divine origin of all religions, and in their Founders as Divine Messengers, and thus it becomes an article of faith with a Muslim to believe in and equally respect and

revere all of them. By giving to the world this sublime truth, Islam has sought to create an atmosphere of amity and goodwill among different creeds, and to remove and banish that rancour and bitterness which has embittered relations between the followers of these creeds all over the world. See also 10 : 48.

3196. Commentary :

The verse continues the theme of the preceding verses and consoles and comforts the Holy Prophet by saying that it is a tragedy of human affairs that the very people who are called to God by their Prophets reject and persecute such Prophets, and that the Holy Prophet is not an exception to this rule. Like them he will receive mockery and abuse from his people.

- 4 28. "Dost thou not see that Allah sends down water from the sky, and We bring forth therewith fruits of different colours; and among the mountains are streaks, white and red, of diverse hues and others raven black;³¹⁹⁷

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ
ثَمَرَاتٍ مُّخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيَضٌ
وَحُمْرٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٍ ۝٢٨

14 : 33; 22 : 6; 30 : 51; 45 : 6.

3197. Important Words :

لَوْنُ (their colours) is the plural of لون (lawwana) which is substantive noun from لون (lawwana). They say لون الشيء i.e. he coloured the thing. لون الشيخ فيه means, old age appeared in his hair. تلوّن الرجل means, the man became fickle-minded. لون means, colour, exterior; form, shape; kind, sort, species (Aqrab & Lane).

جُدَد (streaks) is the plural of جَدَة which is derived from جَد which means, it (a garment) was or became new; جَدَة (juddatun) means, a beaten way or road; a road leading to water; a main road; a sign; the bank or side of a river; the stripe or streak that is in the back of an ass differing from his general colour, a streak in anything as in a mountain, differing in colour from the rest of the mountain (Lane & Aqrab).

غَرَابِيبُ سُود (raven black). غَرَابِيب is the plural of غَرِيب which is derived from غَرِب (ghariba) which means, he or it was or became black; or it was or became black on account of very hot wind. غَرِيب means, intensely black; of which the colour resembles the colour of a crow; when applied to an old man it means one whose hair is intensely black or whose hair does not become white or who blackens his white hair with dye. أَسْوَدُ غَرِيب means, intensely black. But if you say غَرَابِيبُ سُود you make the latter word a substitute for the former; because a word corroborative of one signifying a colour

cannot precede, nor can the corroborative of any word; one of the most excellent kinds of grapes; a variety of grapes growing at Al-Ṭā'if; intensely black; of the most excellent and most delicate and blackest of grapes. غَرَابِيبُ سُود relating to mountains, may mean streaks having black rocks.

Commentary :

The present and next verse invite attention to the study of a wonderful phenomenon of nature which bears striking resemblance to a similar phenomenon in the spiritual realm. The verse purports to say that when rain falls upon dry and parched land it gives rise to a vast variety of crops, flowers and fruits of different colours, tastes, forms and kinds. The rain-water is the same, but the crops, flowers and fruits it produces are vastly different from one another. This difference is evidently due to the nature of the soil and the seed. Similarly, when Divine revelation, which at many places in the Qur'ān has been likened to water, comes to a people, it produces different effects upon different men according to the soil of their hearts and the way in which they receive it. The same revelation which produced such paragons of righteousness and piety as Abū Bakr and 'Umar, served only to increase Abū Jahl, 'Utbah or Shaibah in wickedness and opposition to truth. The verse also signifies

29. And of men and beasts and cattle, in like manner, there are various colours? Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Mighty, Most Forgiving.³¹⁹⁸

30. Surely, *only* those who follow the Book of Allah and observe Prayer "and spend out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a bargain which will never fail;³¹⁹⁹

31. ^bIn order that He may give them their full rewards, and *even* increase them out of His bounty. He is surely Most Forgiving, Most Appreciating.³²⁰⁰

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ
كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ^(٢٩)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ
أَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً
لَّنْ تَبُورَ^(٣٠)

لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ
غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ^(٣١)

^a2 : 175; 14 : 32; 16 : 76. ^b3:58; 39:11.

that the Faithful and the disbelievers are variously graded in goodness and evil. All believers were not like Abū Bakr and 'Umar in righteousness, nor all disbelievers as wicked as Abū Jahl, 'Utbaḥ or Shaibah. The verse further says that the vast variety of colour and kind is not to be found only in plants but also in mountains and rocks as well. All this wonderful phenomenon points to an Intelligent and Powerful Mind behind it.

3198. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the kaleidoscopic variety in form, colour, and kind to which reference has been made in the preceding verse does not only exist in flowers, fruits and rocks but in men, beasts and cattle as well. The words الناس (men), الدواب (beasts) and الأنعام (cattle) may also represent men of different capabilities, dispositions and natural aptitudes. The words,

"only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear God," further lend weight to the view that these three words stand for three classes of men from among whom only those endowed with right knowledge fear God. Knowledge, here, however, does not necessarily mean spiritual knowledge but also knowledge of the laws of nature. A reverent study of nature and its laws inevitably leads one to realise the great powers of God and consequently makes him hold God in reverential awe.

3199. Commentary :

The present verse gives a description of العلماء (those who possess knowledge) mentioned in the preceding verse.

3200. Important Words :

شكور (Most Appreciating) is derived from شكر (shukr) which is noun inf. and means thankfulness. شكر is of three kinds: (1) with the

32. And the Book which We have revealed to thee is the "truth itself, fulfilling that which is before it. Surely, Allah is All-Aware, All-Seeing with respect to His servants.

33. Then We gave the Book for inheritance to those of Our servants whom We chose. And of them are *some* who suppress *their* desires, severely, and of them are *some* who take the middle course, and of them are *some* who excel *others* in acts of goodness by Allah's leave. And that indeed is the great distinction.³²⁰¹

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٢﴾
ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ
سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُأْتِي اللَّهَ بِذِكْرِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٣﴾

22 : 55; 47 : 3; 56 : 96.

heart or mind; (2) with the tongue, and (3) with the limbs. Man's love for God and his humility towards Him and his acknowledgment of Divine favours and eulogising and praising God for having bestowed them upon him and his not making use of those favours in a manner not liked by God, constitutes شكر (thankfulness) on the part of man. شكر (thankfulness) on the part of God consists in forgiving a person or commending him or regarding him with satisfaction, goodwill or favour and hence recompensing or rewarding him (Lane). See also 14 : 8.

3201. Commentary :

After mentioning in verse 25 above that Divine Messengers were sent to all the peoples, and after explaining in the immediately preceding verse (v. 32) that the Qur'ān testifies to the Divine origin of all the Books that were given to those Messengers and fulfils the prophecies that the former Prophets and Divine Books had made about the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, the verse

under comment proceeds to say that the sacred and onerous duty of preaching this last Divine Message to mankind has been entrusted to men whom God has specially selected for this purpose. They are not men of ordinary calibre. They have fully fitted themselves for the discharge of this great duty by passing through various stages of rigorous spiritual discipline. The following are the three stages through which a believer has to pass to attain a very high degree of spiritual development. In the first stage he wages a veritable war against his low desires and passions, and practises strict self-denial. It is after he has learned to control his passions and suppress his evil desires that he moves on to the next stage of "taking the middle course." At this stage he does not falter or fall but his progress towards his goal is but gradual. It is at the third and last stage when he has attained his full moral stature that his progress towards the realization of his great goal becomes rapid and uniform. This stage has been termed سابق بالخيرات in this verse.

34. *Their reward will be* ^aGardens of Eternity. ^bThey will enter them. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and pearls; and their garments therein will be of silk.

35. And they will say, 'All praise belongs to Allah Who has removed grief from us. Surely, our Lord is Most Forgiving, Most Appreciating.'³²⁰²

36. 'Who has, out of His bounty, settled us in the Abode of Eternity, 'where no toil will touch us, nor any weariness affect us therein.'³²⁰³

37. But *as for* those who disbelieve, for them is the fire of Hell. ^aDeath will not be decreed for them so that they may die; nor will the punishment thereof be lightened for them. Thus do We requite every ungrateful person.'³²⁰⁴

جَنَّتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ
مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَ لُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ^(٣٢)

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ
رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ^(٣٥)

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا
فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ^(٣٦)

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
فِيمُوتُوا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَفُورٍ^(٣٧)

^a9 : 72; 13 : 24; 16 : 32; 61 : 13; 98 : 9. ^b18 : 32; 22 : 24 76 : 22. ^c15 : 49. ^d20 : 75; 87 : 14.

3202. Commentary :

When a believer has gone through the three stages of spiritual development mentioned in v. 33 above, all fear of faltering or falling disappears. His spiritual future becomes safe. This state of mind of a true believer is described elsewhere in the Qur'ān in the words لاخوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون i.e. they will not grieve over their past failures, if any, nor will they have fear about any possible future failures.

3203. Important Words :

لغوب (weariness) is infinitive-noun from لغب which means, he was tired or wearied to the utmost or he was languid in consequence of fatigue or he was wearied in spirit or mind. لغوب means, extreme tiresomeness, weariness of mind or spirit (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Complete freedom from every kind of fear and anxiety and perfect peace of mind and satisfaction of heart coupled with the pleasure of God is the highest stage of Paradise that the Qur'ān, as the verse under comment shows, promises to believers in this and the next world.

3204. Commentary :

As contrasted with the Paradise promised to believers and briefly but beautifully portrayed in the preceding verse, a description of the fire of Hell in which disbelievers will burn has been given in the present verse. That fire is the burning of the heart and the absence of peace of mind. There could be no greater Hell in this world than loss of mental peace and poise.

38. And they will cry for help therein, 'Our Lord, "take us out, we will do righteous works other than those we used to do.' *God will say to them, 'Did We not give you a life long enough so that he who would take heed could take heed therein? And there came unto you a Warner too. So taste ye the punishment; for wrong-doers have no helper.*'³²⁰⁵

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا
غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ
فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ۝٣٨

5 39. 'Verily, Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and of the earth. Verily, He knows full well all *that lies hidden* in the breasts.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمُ غَيْبِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۝٣٩

40. 'He it is Who made you vicegerents in the earth. So he who disbelieves, will *himself* suffer the *consequences* of his disbelief. And for the disbelievers their disbelief will only increase odium in the sight of their Lord, and their disbelief will increase for the disbelievers nothing but loss.'³²⁰⁶

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا
خَسَارًا ۝٤٠

^a7 : 54; 26 : 103; 32 : 13; 39 : 59. ^b11 : 124; 16 : 78; 27 : 66.

3205. Important Words :

اصطرخ (cry for help) is derived from صطرخ which is synonymous with صرخ which means, he raised his voice; called out; cried or cried vehemently or for help (Lane).

3206. Commentary :

After the advent of the Holy Prophet has

been mentioned in v. 38 above, in the present verse the people to whom he preached his Message are warned that God has selected them to be the recipients and bearers of His revelation. He has been very gracious and kind to them for having selected them for the bestowal of His grace, but if they refused to accept His Messenger, great indeed will also be their punishment,

41. Say, ^a“Have you seen your associate-gods whom you call on beside Allah? Show me *then* what they have created of the earth. Or have they a share in the creation of the heavens? Or have We given them a Book so that they have an evidence therefrom?” Nay, the wrongdoers promise one another nothing but delusion.³²⁰⁷

42. ^bSurely, Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they deviate *from their positions*. And if they did deviate, none can hold them after Him. Verily, He is Forbearing, Most Forgiving.³²⁰⁸

43. ^cAnd they swore by Allah their strongest oaths, that if a Warner came to them, they would follow guidance better than any other people. But when a Warner did come to them, it only increased them in aversion,³²⁰⁹

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَ كُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَا ذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ
بَلْ إِنَّ يَعِدُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا³²⁰⁷
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَيِّدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْ تَزُولَا وَ
لَيْنَ زَالَتَا إِنَّ أَمْسَكُهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا³²⁰⁸

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ
لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
نَذِيرٌ مَّا رَادَّهُمْ إِلَّا نِفُورًا³²⁰⁹

^a34; 28; 46 : 5. ^b22 : 66. ^c6 : 158.

3207. Commentary :

As the Arabs, who were the first addressees of the Message of the Qur’ān, were steeped in worst form of idolatry, God has exposed the futility of their polytheistic beliefs again and again in the Qur’ān. In the present verse the idolaters are asked, why do they worship other gods besides Allah when these false gods have neither created any earthly thing nor have they made any contribution to the creation of the celestial bodies? They are further asked whether they have a revealed Book which gives them the authority to preach and promulgate their false beliefs. They should at least possess some reason or authority for their idolatrous beliefs and practices.

3208. Commentary :

The present verse continues the argument in repudiation of idolatry. It purports to say that both the celestial and terrestrial systems continue to work in perfect harmony with and subject to Divine laws. The fact that there exists complete harmony and order among different parts of the universe, reveals the existence of an Intelligent and All-Powerful Being behind it. That Supreme and Intelligent Being is God Who deserves and demands our worship and adoration.

3209. Commentary :

The verse gives another argument to bring home to disbelievers the sense of the guilt of

44. ^aAnd in being arrogant in the earth and plotting evil. But the evil plot encompasses none but the authors thereof. ^bDo they then look for anything but God's way of dealing with the peoples of old? But thou wilt never find any change in the way of Allah; nor wilt thou ever find any alteration in the way of Allah.³²¹⁰

45. ^cHave they not travelled in the earth and seen how evil was the end of those who were before them? And they were stronger than these in power. And Allah is not such that anything in the heavens or the earth should frustrate His plans; verily, He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.³²¹¹

إِسْتَكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ
الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ
لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

^a27 : 51-52; 35 : 13. ^b17 : 78; 33 : 63; 48 : 24. ^c12 : 110; 22 : 47; 30 : 10; 40 : 22; 47 : 11.

rejecting the Holy Prophet. It purports to say to them that they used to taunt the Jews and the Christians for rejecting their own Prophets and revelations; and, by assuming an air of superiority, used to say to the latter that if ever a Prophet of God appeared among them they would at once accept him. But now that the greatest of the Prophets has been raised among them, they are opposing and persecuting him.

3210. Commentary :

The verse warns disbelievers that if they persisted in their disbelief, they will be punished like disbelievers of the Prophets of yore. It is an established and invariable Divine law that opposition to Divine laws never goes

unpunished. This fact is writ large on the history of all revealed religions. This is God's way and God's ways never change.

3211. Commentary :

The verse means to say that if disbelievers have any doubt that their rejection of and opposition to the Holy Prophet will not be punished, then let them "travel in the earth and see how evil was the end of those who were before them," and who rejected God's Prophets in their own time. Let them remember that it is God's unalterable decree that all their plans and plots to bring the Holy Prophet to naught will end in failure and the cause of Islam will triumph over disbelief.

46. "And if Allah were to punish people for what they do, He would not leave a living creature on the surface of *the earth*; but He grants them respite until an appointed term; and ^bwhen their appointed time comes, then *they find that* Allah has all His servants *well* under *His* eyes.³²¹²

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى
ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ
بَصِيرًا ۝

^a10 : 12; 18 : 59. ^b7 : 35; 10 : 50; 16 : 62.

3212. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that though, by their rejection of truth and iniquitous deeds, disbelievers have made themselves deserving of Divine punishment, yet the Merciful God is slow in punishing them. He grants respite and affords opportunities to the wicked and the rebellious people in order that they may mend their ways and accept the truth. If God had meted out swift and quick punishment to sinners, they would have been destroyed in no time, and the world would have come to an end, and all life on earth would have become extinct, because there would be no purpose left in the beasts, animals, birds, etc., remaining alive after man's destruc-

tion. Being created for man's use, they too would have perished. But this respite and delay in punishment should not be understood to signify that disbelievers can indefinitely escape or avoid it. When the cup of their iniquities is full, says the verse, the decreed hour of retribution will arrive and they will be allowed no further respite.

The words دابة signifying "worm of the earth" may also apply to disbelievers because of their devoting all their labour and endeavour to the acquirement of worldly comforts and riches. In this sense of the word the verse would mean that God will not hesitate to destroy these abominable worms of the earth.

CHAPTER 36

Y Ā S Ī N

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

This *Sūra* takes its title from its second verse where the Holy Prophet is addressed as ياسين *i.e.*, O perfect leader! The *Sūra* is decidedly of Meccan origin. All scholarly opinion is agreed on this point. Its style and contents also support this view. On account of the importance of its subject-matter, the Holy Prophet called it the heart of the Qur'ān.

In the preceding *Sūra* it was stated that God, being the Maker of the heavens and the earth, has made full provision not only for the physical needs of man but also for his moral and spiritual requirements. This He did by revealing Himself to His chosen servants, whom He raised among every people. The revelation of God to His servants found its most perfect manifestation in the Holy Prophet whom the present *Sūra* designates as “perfect leader” or the leader *par excellence*. To him God not only revealed Himself in His completest manifestation but also gave him the most perfect and infallible Book in the form of the Qur'ān, by which his people attained God's pleasure and achieved great success and eminence in life.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with addressing the Holy Prophet as “perfect leader” or leader *par excellence*, meaning that the system of Divine Messengers which began with Adam found its most perfect example in him. The Holy Prophet's path is now the only right and straight path that leads to God. All other paths that formerly led to the Supreme Being have now been closed and shall remain closed till the end of time. God will now reveal Himself to the world through the Holy Prophet's followers. In His infallible wisdom He has chosen the Arabs, among whom no Messenger had come for centuries, to preach to humanity the last Divine Message *i.e.* Islam. The land of Arabia was dreary and dry. The water of Divine revelation descended upon it and it has now begun to blossom into a new and vigorous spiritual life.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to tell in metaphorical language how God had been revealing Himself to mankind through His Messengers. It tells of Moses and Jesus and of the Holy Prophet, who were raised in the fulness of time to call men to God. Then it tells of a “certain man” whom God will raise from among the followers of the Holy Prophet in a land far from the centre of Islam, in the Latter Days, when religion would be at its lowest ebb and the very idea of Divine revelation would be doubted and denied. This Divine Reformer will call mankind to Islam. But like the Prophets of yore, his will be a voice in the wilderness. The forces of evil will hold the whole world in their

firm grip. Man will worship false gods and as a result of his sins Divine wrath will be excited and God's punishment will descend upon the world. This punishment will be sudden and swift like a blast from heaven and will leave the earth scorched and singed and the guilty will be called upon to render an account of their evil actions.

Next, the *Sūra* invites attention to the study of a well-known law of nature, viz., that when all earth becomes dry and parched, God sends down rain and the dead soil begins to vibrate with a new life, and herbage, vegetables and flowers and fruits of various kinds grow up. Similarly, in the spiritual realm when man's soul becomes corroded and contaminated and he is stuck fast in the quagmire of sin and iniquity, God, out of His infinite grace and mercy, causes spiritual water to descend from heaven in the form of Divine revelation. The *Sūra* then gives another simile to explain the same subject. It points to the law of the alternation of day and night and from it draws the moral lesson that just as, in the physical world, day follows night, similarly in the spiritual world when darkness spreads, a Prophet is raised to dispel it. Divine Prophets are of two categories: (a) Law-bearing Prophets who, like the sun, are an independent source of light; and (b) subordinate Prophets who, like the moon, derive and borrow their light from the Master-Prophet. The *Sūra* further points to a revealed truth that God has created all things in pairs; there are pairs even in vegetables and inorganic matter. This simile points out that Divine revelation must be accompanied by human reason and intelligence. All true knowledge is the result of the combination of Divine revelation and human reason.

Then, after recounting some Divine blessings, the *Sūra* gives a brief but graphic description of the conditions of believers and disbelievers in this and the next world. The believers, it says, will have the good things of the world in this life and the pleasure and grace of God in the next, and disbelievers will completely fail in their designs and endeavours against the cause of truth in this life. They will be punished with صيحة (a blast) in this world and will burn in the fire of Hell in the next, and when they will be made to stand before God's Judgment Seat, their mouths, hands, and feet will bear witness against them.

Towards its close the *Sūra* draws attention to the great and bright future of Islam. It says that God's decree, viz., that a people like the Arabs who had lain very low in the scale of humanity for long centuries should now rise to the height of material power and spiritual glory, is not an idle dream or poetic fancy. A Prophet of God, a Divine Messenger, has appeared among them and he will lead them to the highest pinnacles of spiritual and material grandeur. And this is not a difficult thing for the Almighty and All-Powerful God, Who creates man from a mere sperm-drop and then develops him into a full-fledged, strong, vigorous and intelligent being. When it is the decree of the Great Creator and Controller of the universe that a people grovelling in dust and dirt should be made the rulers and teachers of mankind, who can stand in the way of His design or who can thwart or frustrate His purpose?



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³²¹³

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Yā Sīn.^{3213A}

يٰسَ ②

3. By the Qur'an, full of wisdom.³²¹⁴

وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ ③

4. Thou art indeed *one* of the Messengers,

إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ④

5. On a right path.³²¹⁵

عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1.

3213. Commentary :

See: 1 : 1.

3213A. Commentary :

In the combined abbreviated letters ياسين the word سين according to Ibn 'Abbās stands for الانسان meaning, man or perfect man, or for سيد i.e. chief or leader. Thus the expression ياسين would mean, "O Perfect Man!" or "O Perfect Leader!" According to the consensus of scholarly opinion, the reference in these combined letters is to the Holy Prophet. The Prophet has been addressed as "perfect man" because humanity found its best and most perfect specimen in him. He has also been called "the perfect leader," because after his advent great religious Reformers and Divine Teachers were to rise only from among his followers. The door of revelation has been closed to the followers of all other Prophets. He is therefore "the perfect man" or the "leader *par excellence*."

3214. Commentary :

The Qur'an has been adduced here as an argument to prove and establish the Holy Prophet's claim as a Messenger of God. In fact, the most effective and convincing argument to prove the truth of the Holy Prophet's mission is the

Qur'an. There could be no greater testimony to the Holy Prophet's truth than the fact that being himself unlettered he gave to the world a Book which is full of wisdom and which far excels all other revealed Scriptures in its multifarious and multitudinous beauties and excellences and is a complete code of laws meant for the moral uplift and spiritual regeneration of humanity for all time. The Qur'an is indeed a standing miracle and an incontrovertible testimony to the truth of the Holy Prophet.

3215. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet's path now is the only right and straight path that leads to God. All other paths that formerly led to Him have now been closed and shall remain closed till the end of time. The fact that after the advent of the Holy Prophet there has not appeared among the followers of any other religion a single claimant to Divine revelation, while there have been living among the followers of Islam in every age, persons to whom God spoke and revealed Himself, is a proof positive of the Holy Prophet's path being now the only right and straight path, and of the Qur'an being the only revealed Book which can lead man to God.

6. *"This is a revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful,*

تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝٦

7. *^bThat thou mayest warn a people whose fathers were not warned, and so they are heedless.*³²¹⁶

لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنْذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ ۝٧

8. *Surely, the word has proved true against most of them, for they believe not.*

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝٨

9. *^cWe have put round their necks collars reaching unto the chins, so that their heads are forced up.*³²¹⁷

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ ۝٩

^a20 : 5; 32 : 3; 40 : 3; 41 : 3; 45 : 3; 46 : 3. ^b28 : 47 : 32 ; 4. ^c13 : 6; 76 : 5.

The verse makes a fine distinction between a Prophet and a philosopher. A philosopher takes a long time to find out truth and often gets lost in the quest, but a Prophet of God discovers it by the shortest route and in the shortest period of time. Unlike philosophers he is guided to it direct by Divine revelation without wandering in the labyrinth of abstract and abstruse ideas.

3216. Commentary :

The Arabs were the immediate addressees of the Holy Prophet and among them no Divine Messenger had appeared for a long time. But in His infallible wisdom God selected them for preaching to mankind the last Divine Message. The Qur'ān has incontestibly laid claim to being that Message. The following verses of the Qur'ān speak of its finality and universality : "Say, O mankind, truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah" (7 : 159); "And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples" (21:108); "Blessed is He Who has sent down the Discrimination to His servant, that he may be a Warner to all the worlds (25:2); "And We have not sent thee but as a Bearer of good news and

as a Warner to all mankind" (34 : 29).

3217. Important Words :

مقْمَحُونَ (their heads are forced up) is derived from قَمَحَ. They say قَمَحَ البعير *i.e.* the camel raised his head from the water and refused to drink, his thirst being satisfied or by reason of his dislike of water. أَقْمَحَ means, he raised his head and contracted his eyes. أَقْمَحَهُ الْعِلْ means, the collar caused his (the captive's) head to be raised by reason of the straitness thereof. أَقْمَحَ بِأَنْفِهِ means, he was proud; behaved proudly; or elevated his nose from pride. إِقْمَاح also signifies the elevating of the head by means of pride (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The reference in the word أَغْلَال (chains) may be to the "shackles" of customs, usages, and prejudices, by which disbelievers are fettered and which prevent them from accepting the truth. The word مُقْمَحُونَ (their heads are forced up) may also refer to disbelievers' notion of false superiority and pride which leads to the same result. The verse may have reference also to the Battle of Badr or to the Fall of Mecca. After the Battle

10. And We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and have covered them over, so that they cannot see.³²¹⁸

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ⑩

11. "And it is alike to them whether thou warn them or warn them not: they will not believe."³²¹⁹

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ⑪

12. ^bThou canst warn only him who would follow the Reminder and fear the Gracious *God* in secret. So give him the glad tidings of forgiveness and a noble reward.³²²⁰

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ
فَبَشِّرْهُ بِغُفْرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ⑫

a2 : 7. b35 : 19.

of Badr the Meccan chiefs were brought in chains and at the Fall of Mecca they were seized with utter confusion, the word *مقمحورون* (see root meaning of the word under "Important Words" above) giving a graphic description of their bewilderment and consternation when all of a sudden they found the Holy Prophet at the very gates of Mecca, at the head of an army of ten thousand strong. Their eyes remained fixed in a stare and they ran about with heads raised in bewilderment.

3218. Commentary :

The barriers referred to in the verse may be the barriers of usages, prejudices, and pride of disbelievers. They could not look forward to the great and bright future which lay before them if they accepted Islam, and they did not look back to the histories of past peoples who rejected the truth and were seized with Divine punish-

ment. The result of the barriers placed before and behind them was that they themselves became totally devoid of all spiritual light.

3219. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the inevitable result of disbelievers' deliberately shutting their eyes and ears to the truth to which reference has been made in the preceding verse was that the timely warning did not benefit them and by their persistent rejection of the Truth they rendered themselves deserving of Divine punishment.

3220. Commentary :

The expression *بالغيب* (in secret) may mean that (1) a believer fears God while he does not see Him; (2) he behaves as a righteous and God-fearing person even when other people are not seeing him, *i.e.* he is sincere and honest in his belief and actions.

13. Surely, We *alone* give life to the dead, and We write down that which they send forward and that which they leave behind; "and all things have We recorded in a clear Book."³²²¹

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ
وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾

٢. 2 14. And set forth to them the parable of a people of the town, when the Messengers came to it.³²²²

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا
الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

^a18 : 50; 72 : 29.

3221. Important Words :

إِمَام (Book) is derived from أَم. They say أَم القوم او أَم بالقوم i.e. he led the people; he took precedence of them. إِمَام means, a leader of a people or army; a model or an example; the religious Scripture of any people; a road or way, a tract of land, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 125; 17 : 72 & 25 : 75.

آثَار (that which they leave behind). آثَار is the plural of أَثَر which is infinitive noun from أَثَرَ (athara). They say أَثَرَ خَفَ البعير i.e. he made an incision in the foot of the camel. أَثَر means, a relic; a trace remaining of a thing; a sign or mark or trace; a foot-print (Lane). See also 20 : 97.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that with the exception of those unfortunate people who by their persistent rejection of Truth have shut upon themselves the door of God's mercy and for whom no admonition is of any avail, the spiritually dead Arabs will be brought to life through the teachings of the Qur'ān and they will set such a noble example of righteousness and godliness that the footprints they will leave behind for others to follow will be made to endure and will be remembered with respect and serve as a

source of inspiration for generations yet unborn.

3222 Important Words :

قَرْيَة (the town) is infinitive-noun from قَرَى. They say قَرَى الضيف i.e. he entertained the guest. قَرَى الماء في الحوض means, he collected the water in the pond. قَرْيَة means, a town, a central town. It is so called because people from all quarters gather there and also because they are entertained there. The word also means, gathering of men (Aqrab).

Commentary :

A part of the *Sūra* deals, in metaphorical language, with the advent of a great Reformer in the Latter Days who was to represent the Second Coming of the Holy Prophet. This important subject begins with the present verse.

The word قَرْيَة may have been used here in its wider sense meaning any town or place, or speaking metaphorically, it may stand for the whole world. The whole world has been called a قَرْيَة here because in the Latter Days the means of communication were to develop so extensively that the whole world was to become, as it were, one town. In this sense of the word the expression may signify humanity at large. The use of the word "parable" with regard to

15. When We sent to them two Messengers, and they rejected them both; so We strengthened *them* by a third, and they said, 'Verily, we have been sent to you as Messengers.'³²²³

16. They replied, "You are but men like us and the Gracious God has not revealed anything. You only lie."³²²⁴

17. They said, 'Our Lord knows that we are indeed *His* Messengers to you;

18. ^bAnd our *duty* is only plain delivery of the *Message*.'

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ
فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُرْسَلُونَ ۝١٥

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ ۝١٦

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ ۝١٧

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ۝١٨

^a14 : 11; 26 : 155. ^b13 : 41; 16 : 36; 24 : 55; 29 : 19.

the account of *أصحاب القرية* i.e. people of the town, seems to lend further support to the view that *القرية* may not be a particular town that has been mentioned here. The whole account is a parable or simile.

Or the word *القرية* signifying a particular town may refer to Mecca, the Centre and Citadel of Islam. In that case the word *المرسلون* (the Messengers) will apply to the Holy Prophet in whose person all the Messengers and Prophets of God were represented. See next verse.

3223. **Commentary :**

The verse by way of introduction to the main subject makes a brief reference to two great Israelite Prophets, Moses and Jesus, one the Founder, and the other the great exponent of the Jewish Dispensation.

If the word *القرية* in the preceding verse may be taken as referring to Mecca, the two Messengers mentioned in the verse under comment will be Abraham and Ishmael.

The reference in the words "a third," in the expression "We strengthened them by third,"

seems to be to the Holy Prophet who testified to the truth of both Moses and Jesus and also to that of Abraham and Ishmael. The word *ثالث* (a third) has been used as a *نكرة* in order to signify the greatness of the third Prophet, the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet "strengthened" Moses and Jesus, also Abraham and Ishmael by testifying to the truth of their missions and by fulfilling in his person the prophecies they had made about his advent (Deut. 18 : 18 & Matt. 21 : 33-46).

3224. **Commentary :**

All the three great Prophets mentioned in the preceding verse were rejected on the plea that they were just ordinary "men like us" and that God never revealed anything to anybody. The pretext which disbelievers put forward in justification of their rejection of God's Prophets has elsewhere been mentioned in the Qur'ān in the words : "We have not heard of such a thing among our forefathers" (23 : 25).

19. They said, 'Surely, we augur evil fortune from you; if you desist not, we will certainly stone you, and a painful punishment will surely befall you at our hands.'³²²⁵

20. They replied, 'Your evil fortune is with your own selves. *Do you say this* because you have been admonished? Nay, you are a people transgressing all bounds.'^{3225A}

21. "And from the farthest part of the town there came a man running. He said, 'O my people, follow the Messengers,'³²²⁶

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ
وَلَيَسَنَّنَّكُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ^{١٩}

قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَكُرْتُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ
مُسْرِفُونَ^{٢٠}

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ
اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ^{٢١}

428 : 21.

3225. Important Words :

نرجمكم (We will certainly stone you) is derived from رجم. They say رجمه i.e. he pelted him with stones; he smote and killed him; he drove him and killed him; he drove him away; he cursed him; he reviled or abused him; he boycotted or excommunicated him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 19 : 47.

Commentary :

When as a result of their rejection of the Divine Message disbelievers are visited with heavenly punishment in the form of calamities and misfortunes, then instead of repenting and mending their ways, they seek to attribute those visitations to the "inauspicious" advent of the Prophet himself. Moses was taunted by the Israelites for having brought all the misfortunes with him in the words, "We were made to suffer before thou camest to us and even after thou camest to us (7 : 130). Similarly, all other Prophets were taunted and mocked by disbelievers. It is to this attitude of disbelievers that the words, "surely we augur evil fortune from you," refer.

3225A. Commentary :

طائر also means, your works. See 17 : 14.

3226. Commentary :

The implied reference in the word رجل signifying "a great man," may be to the Promised Messiah who has been referred to as رجل in several sayings of the Holy Prophet. In one of his very well-known sayings the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

لو كان الايمان معلقا بالثريا لنالاه رجل من أبناء فارس i.e. if Faith were to go up to the Pleiades, a man from among the sons of Persia would bring it down to the earth (Bukhari, *kitāb al-Taḥsīn*).

أقصا المدينة (the town) in the expression المدينة (farthest part of the town) may stand for القرية (36: 14) or for مدينة النبي i.e. the town of the Holy Prophet. In the latter sense of the word, the expression أقصا المدينة may signify that the Promised Messiah would be born in a place far away from المدينة, the second Centre and Headquarters of Islam. In another verse of the Qur'ān (17:2), the scene of the Second Advent of the Holy

22. 'Follow those who ask of you no reward, and who are rightly guided.

23. 'And what reason have I that I should not worship Him Who has created me, and unto Whom you will be brought back?'³²²⁷

24. 'Shall I take others beside Him as gods? "If the Gracious God should intend me any harm, their intercession will avail me naught, nor can they rescue me."³²²⁸

25. 'In that case I should indeed be in manifest error.

26. 'I believe in your Lord; so listen to me.'³²²⁹

اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

أَتَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِنْ يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَنُ يَضِرَّ

لَا تُغْنِي عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونِ ﴿٢٤﴾

إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِئْتُ ضَلِيلٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمِعُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾

422 : 13-14; 39 : 39.

Prophet has been spoken of as المسجد البعيد *i.e.* the Distant Mosque. Words analogous in meaning and significance to the word يسعى (running) have also been used about the Promised Messiah by the Holy Prophet in some of his sayings which point to his tireless, quick and indefatigable work for the cause of Islam.

All the above references, seem to point to the Promised Messiah as being the رجل (the great man) mentioned in the verse under comment. It is the Promised Messiah who, for the first time, revealed to the world the Quranic truth that Founders of all the great religions of the world were Divine Messengers. as the words, "he said, 'O my people, follow the Messengers,'" point out.'

3227. **Commentary :**

The implied reference in this and the preceding verse seems to be to the special pledge which the

Promised Messiah used to take from every new Ahmadi in the words :

میں دین کو دنیا پر مقدم کروں گا

i.e. I will give precedence to religion over the things of the world.

3228. **Commentary :**

The verse shows that people will worship various gods in the time of the Promised Messiah—mammon, material power, false political philosophies and impracticable economic theories, etc.

3229. **Commentary :**

This verse shows that the Promised Messiah will found no new religion. He will only invite people to *their* Lord, *i.e.* to the religion of the people (Muslims) to whom he will primarily address his Message, *i.e.* he will invite people to Islam.

27. It was said to him, 'Enter Paradise.' He said, 'O would that my people knew,'³²³⁰

28. 'How graciously my Lord has granted me forgiveness and has made me of the honoured ones!'

29. And We sent not down against his people, after him, any host from heaven, nor do We send down any such.

30. "It was but a single blast and lo! they were extinct."³²³¹

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَلَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِّنَ

السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ خِيدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

^a21 : 40; 36 : 50; 67 : 28.

3230. Commentary :

Special mention of Paradise in this verse in connection with رجل يسمى *i.e.* the Promised Messiah, is very significant. When all true believers have been promised Paradise in the Qur'ān, this special mention seems to be superfluous and out of place. The establishment by the Promised Messiah, under a special Divine Command, of a special graveyard known as the *Bahishī Maqbarah* (Paradise graveyard) in which are buried righteous believers who endeavour scrupulously to observe all the commandments of the *Shrī'at* and regularly contribute at least one-tenth of their earnings towards the fund specially set up for the furtherance of the cause of Islam appears to be the literal and physical fulfilment of the commandment embodied in the words "Enter Paradise." A revelation of the Promised Messiah, *viz.*, انى أنزلت معك الجنة *i.e.* I have caused the Paradise to descend with thee (Tadhkirah), seems to support this interpretation of the words "enter Paradise."

3231. Important Words :

خامدون (extinct) is the plural of خامد which is active participle from خمد . They say خمدت النار *i.e.* the fire subsided, its embers remaining unextinguished. خمد المريض means, the sick man fainted or swooned or died. خمدت الحمى means, the vehemence of the fever became allayed (Lane). See also 21 : 16.

Commentary :

The verse seems to describe the form of heavenly punishment which will overtake wicked people in the time of the Promised Messiah. The description seems to apply to the falling of shells, incendiary and atomic bombs, which come down with a crashing sound. The fire caused by the bombs destroys everything on which they fall and reduces it to rubble, and all life for miles around becomes extinct. Elsewhere the Qur'ān describes this punishment in the words "We shall make all that is thereon a barren soil" (18 : 9).

31. Alas for My servants! ^athere comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him.³²³²

يَحْزَنَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا
كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. ^bHave they not seen how many generations We have destroyed before them, ^cand that ^dthey never return to them?³²³³

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ
إِلَيْهِمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. And all of them, gathered together, will certainly be brought before Us.³²³⁴

وَأَنَّ كُلَّ تَلَا جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

3 34. ^dAnd the dead earth is *also* a Sign for them: We quicken it and bring forth therefrom grain, of which they eat.³²³⁵

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ ۖ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا
مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a15 : 12; 43 : 8. ^b17 : 18; 19 : 99; 20 : 129; 50 : 37. ^c21 : 96; 23 : 100. ^d16 : 12, 66; 23 : 20.

3232. Commentary :

The words of this verse are full of pathos. The Almighty Himself seems, as it were, to be full of grief over the rejection and mocking of His Prophets by men. While the Prophets grieved and pined for their peoples, the latter requited their grief with contempt and mockery.

While the verse means that every Prophet of God was rejected, mocked and jeered at by his people, it has a special reference to the Promised Messiah, signifying that in his time all Prophets will be rejected *i.e.* the very idea of Divine revelation will be doubted and denied.

3233. Commentary :

The expression *انهم اليهم لا يرجعون* may mean; (a) those who are destroyed do not come back to those who mock the Prophets; (b) the past generations were destroyed because they did not turn to their Prophets, *i.e.* did not listen to them.

3234. Commentary :

The reference in this verse seems to be to Divine punishment which will be universal in its character. The last Great War seemed to be such a punishment as it had embraced almost the whole of humanity. Who knows what greater punishments are yet in store for humanity? Man has consigned God to oblivion, and therefore shall be made to realize his duty towards his Creator.

3235. Commentary :

What greater Sign of the power of God there could be than that in a certain season of the year the earth becomes dried up and parched. Then water falls from heaven and all of a sudden it begins to bloom and blossom and becomes full of all kinds of fruits and flowers. From this similitude the present verse draws attention to the fact that a greater Divine Sign is about to occur in the dry and parched land of Arabia.

35. ^aAnd We have placed in it *also* gardens of date-palms and grapes, and We have caused springs to gush forth therein.³²³⁶

36. That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and it was not their hands that made them *grow up*. Will they not then be grateful?

37. ^bHoly is He Who created all things in pairs, of what the earth grows, and of themselves, and of what they know not.³²³⁷

38. ^cAnd a Sign for them is the night from which We strip off the day, and lo! they are in darkness.³²³⁸

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجْرْنَا
فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٣٥﴾

لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا
يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ
الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ ۖ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ
مُظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a13 : 5; 16 : 68; 23 : 20. ^b13 : 4; 51 : 50. ^c17 : 13; 40 : 62; 41 : 38.

The water of Divine revelation has begun to descend on it and it will now vibrate with new life. This drama was enacted before the very eyes of the world. Through the teachings of the Qur'ān and under the influence of the Holy Prophet, a people steeped deep in the darkness of ignorance and iniquity, within the brief space of a few years, not only themselves became enlightened and learned but also imparted light and learning to the spiritually and morally dark and dead world. The reference in the verse may also be to the appearance of a Prophet in the Latter Days.

3236. Commentary :

The metaphor used in the preceding verse is continued here. The verse means to say that from the dry land of Arabia will gush forth springs and fountains of spiritual knowledge, and trees laden with different kinds of spiritual fruit will grow up all over the land.

3237. Commentary :

The verse reveals a scientific truth, viz., that God has created all things in pairs, which was simply inconceivable at the time the Qur'ān was revealed and among the people to whom it was revealed.

Science now has discovered the truth that pairs exist in all things, in vegetable kingdom, and even in inorganic matter. It has yet to unfold this truth in all its various details. Even the so-called elements do not exist by themselves. They depend upon other things for their sustenance. This scientific truth applies to human intellect also. Until heavenly light descends, man cannot have true knowledge which is born of a combination of Divine revelation and human intelligence.

3238. Commentary :

"Night" in Quranic terminology represents the period during which no fresh revelation descends from heaven and "day" represents

39. ^aAnd the sun is moving on the course *prescribed* for it. That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-Knowing God.³²³⁹

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ۚ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. ^bAnd for the moon We have appointed stages, till it becomes again like an old dry branch of a palm-tree.³²⁴⁰

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ ۚ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ
الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, ^cnor can the night outstrip the day. ^dAll of them float in an orbit.³²⁴¹

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا
الَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

^a6 : 97; 55 : 6. ^b10 : 6. ^c25 : 63. ^d21 : 34.

the time when there is present in the world a Divine Reformer. The verse points to the law of the alternation of day and night and from it draws the moral that as in the physical world day follows night, similarly in the spiritual realm when darkness enshrouds the world, a Divine Reformer is raised to dispel it, and, then, again, after the lapse of a long time, spiritual light disappears, and there is darkness all round. The phenomenon continues uninterruptedly in both the spiritual and physical worlds.

3239. Commentary :

In the spiritual realm the sun may represent a Law-bearing Prophet.

3240. Commentary :

As in the spiritual sense the sun stands for a Law-bearing Prophet, so does the moon represent a Prophet who follows the *Shari'at* of the Law-bearing Prophet and who derives all spiritual light and life from him.

3241. Important Words :

يسبحون (float) is derived from سبح which means, he swam. They say تسبح النجوم في الفلك i.e., the stars swim, float or glide along swiftly in the firmament (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The reference in this verse is to the floating of the heavenly bodies through space or ether. The Qur'ān contradicted the view held for a long time that the heavens were solid in their formation. It is characteristic of the Qur'ān that it uses expressions which not only contradict erroneous religious beliefs and scientific views but also anticipate new discoveries in the domain of science and philosophy. It has revealed, in plain simple language, scientific truths which were unknown to the world at the time of its revelation and which even remained hidden for centuries afterwards. This alone constitutes sufficient proof that the Qur'ān is the revealed Word of Him Who is the Supreme

42. And a Sign for them is that We carry their offspring in the laden ship,

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلِّ الْمَشُونِ ﴿٣٢﴾

43. And. We will create for them the like thereof ^awhereon they will ride.³²⁴²

وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

44. And if We *so* willed, We could drown them; then they would have no one to succour *them*, nor would they be rescued,³²⁴³

وَإِنْ تَشَاءْ نَغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْقَذُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. Except through mercy from Us and as a provision for a time.

إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a16 : 8, 9; 23: 23; 43 : 13.

Source of all knowledge and from Whom nothing is hidden,

The verse also points to the excellent design and order that pervades the entire universe; all the celestial and terrestrial bodies performing their allotted tasks regularly, punctually and unerringly, without trespassing on one another's sphere of action. "The solar system is but one of hundreds of millions of systems, some of which are incalculably larger than it. Yet the countless millions of suns and stars profusely scattered over the immense void are so arranged and distributed in relation to one another as to secure the safety of one and all and to produce everywhere harmony and beauty. Each orb is reflecting the orbit of every other, yet each proceeds safely on its destined way, and all united, form a glorious harmony of structure and motion." This immaculate design and perfect order pervading the universe unerringly points to a Designer and Controller behind it.

3242. **Commentary :**

There were no steamships in the world when the Qur'ān was revealed. There used to be only ordinary boats made of wood which plied with oars or floated with the aid of sails. It was at such a time that the Qur'ān foretold that God would bring into existence new kinds of boats. Steamers and big liners, airships and aeroplanes which are so much in use in these days are a clear fulfilment of this Quranic prophecy. The present and the preceding verse which speaks of sea-voyage seem to refer to the present time and not to Arabs in the Holy Prophet's time who were not familiar with these things.

3243. **Commentary :**

The verse seems to say that Western Christian nations who have greatly benefited by sea-travel and have enslaved weaker nations by their great sea-power will not go unpunished if they did not give up their evil ways and the worship of mammon.

46. And when it is said to them, 'Guard yourselves against that which is before you *through prayer*, and that which is behind you *through repentance*, that you may receive mercy,' *they turn away*.³²⁴⁴

47. "And there comes not to them any Sign out of the Signs of their Lord, but they turn away from it.

48. And when it is said to them, 'Spend out of that with which Allah has provided you,' those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Shall we feed him whom Allah would have fed, if He had *so* willed? You are but in manifest error."³²⁴⁵

49. "And they say, 'When will this promise *be fulfilled*, if *indeed* you are truthful?'

50. They are waiting only for ^aa single blast which will seize them while they are still disputing.³²⁴⁶

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ ۖ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّصُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

^a6 : 5, 21 : 3; 26 : 6. ^b3 : 182; 5 : 65. ^c21 : 39; 34 : 30; 67 : 26.

^d21 : 40; 36 : 30; 38 : 16 : 67; 28.

3244. Commentary :

The words مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ may mean, "the evil consequences of your future evil deeds" and مَا خَلْفَكُمْ may mean "the results of the wicked deeds you might have done in the past."

3245. Commentary :

The verse seems to imply that Divine punishment referred to in the preceding verses which will overtake the materialistic Christian nations, will take the form of a revolt on the part of the suppressed and starved nations of the East. The Eastern nations will rebel and revolt because the

Western nations will have mercilessly exploited them and carried all their wealth to the West and denied them even bare subsistence. It is to this exploitation of the weak Eastern nations by the strong Western nations that the reference is made in the words "shall we feed him whom Allah would have fed, if He had so willed."

3246. Commentary :

The punishment mentioned here will be like a bolt from the blue. It will be so swift and sudden that, as mentioned in the next verse, the

51. And they will not be able to make a will, nor will they return to their families.

٤. 52. "And the trumpet shall be blown, and lo! from the graves they will hasten on to their Lord."³²⁴⁷

53. They will say, 'O, woe to us! who has raised us from our place of sleep? This is what the Gracious God had promised, and the Messengers indeed spoke the truth.'³²⁴⁸

54. It will be but one blast and lo! they will all be brought before Us.³⁵⁴⁹

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ٥١

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَنْسِلُونَ ٥٢

قَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدِنَا سَكَنَ هَذَا مَا
وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ٥٣

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا
مُحْضَرُونَ ٥٤

418 : 10; 39 : 69; 50 : 21; 69 : 14.

guilty people will not be able even to make a will. The reference may be to the swift bombing attacks from the air by which thousands die, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye.

3247. Commentary :

The words "the trumpet shall be blown" may signify, besides the blowing of the trumpet on the Judgment Day, the appearance of a great Divine Reformer at whose clarion call those who are spiritually dead rise from their graves (their state of spiritual death) and hasten to listen to and accept the Divine Summons.

3248. Commentary :

Taken in its literal sense the verse presents no difficulty. It purports to say that when on the Judgment Day men will be raised and disbelievers confronted with their evil deeds, and punishment will stare them in the face, they will be seized with despair and will cry in consternation, "Woe to us! who has raised us from our

place of sleep?" To continue, however, the metaphor of the preceding verse, the verse under comment applies to those people who at the time of the appearance of a Prophet of God do not listen to the Divine Call and prefer to remain in their existing state of spiritual death. At hearing the Divine Call, they exclaim: "Why should anyone disturb the even tenor of our lives and cause commotion and excitement amongst us by inviting us to follow him and adopt a new way of life?"

3249. Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers will be seized with a swift and sudden punishment and will find themselves standing before God's Judgment Seat, i.e. they will be brought face to face with the consequences of their evil deeds. The repeated mention of the word 'blast', within the space of a few verses signifies that the *Sūra* speaks of a time when Divine punishment will

55. "And on that day no soul will be wronged in aught; nor will you be requited but for what you used to do.

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. Verily, the inmates of Heaven will, on that day, be happy in *their* occupation.³²⁵⁰

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهِونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. They and their wives will be in pleasant shades, 'reclining on raised couches'.³²⁵¹

هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكِنُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. "They will have fruits therein, and they will have whatever they call for.

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُمْ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. ^a'Peace on you'—a word of greeting from the Merciful Lord.³²⁵²

سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبِّ رَحِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. And God will say, 'Separate yourselves from the righteous this day, O ye guilty ones!

وَأَمْتَاذُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمَجْرُمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. 'Did I not enjoin on you, O ye sons of Adam, that 'you worship not Satan—for he is to you an open enemy—³²⁵³

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يُبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦١﴾

^{a3} : 26; 40 : 18; 45 : 23. ^{b15} : 48; 18 : 32; 83 : 24. ^{e52} : 23; 55 : 53; 83 : 24.

^{d10} : 11; 14 : 24 ; 33 : 45.

^{f6} : 143; 19 : 45; 24 : 22.

take the form of a blast. The reference may be to the attack of atomic bombs which will destroy whole towns and cities within a few minutes.

3250. Commentary :

The present and the next three verses describe the state of complete bliss which the righteous will enjoy in this and the next world. The verse incidentally shows that life in the next world, as generally misunderstood, will not be a life of inaction and inertness but of constant work and progressive spiritual advance.

3251. Commentary :

All joy and happiness increases manifold if one shares it with another whom he loves.

3252. Commentary :

In a single word سلام meaning "peace," the verse sums up all the various blessings of Paradise—peace with God, and peace with one's ownself, i.e., peace of mind and soul. This is the highest stage of heavenly bliss.

3253. Commentary :

The words of the verse seem to have been spoken more in sorrow than in anger. They

62. 'And that you worship Me?
This is the right path.³²⁵⁴

وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

63. 'And he did lead astray a great
multitude of you. Why did you not
then understand?

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا

تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

64. "This is the Hell which you were
promised.

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

65. 'Enter it this day, because you
disbelieved.'

إِصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

66. This day We shall put a seal on
their mouths, ^band their hands will
speak to Us, and their feet will bear
witness to what they had earned.³²⁵⁵

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ

وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

^a52 : 15; 55 : 44.

^b17 : 37; 24 : 25; 41 : 21-23.

are intended to bring home to sinners and guilty people the sense of their guilt by reminding them that they worked out their ruin with their own hands by deliberately and persistently ignoring and defying God's warning that they should be on their guard against Satan who was their open enemy (7 : 23) and who had brought about the expulsion of their forebears from Paradise (7 : 28).

3254. Commentary :

In the preceding verse the sinners had been warned to be on their guard against the wiles and snares of Satan. In the present verse they are told that God sent His Messengers to guide and lead them to the right path, the path of salvation and eternal bliss, but they refused to accept Divine guidance. The inevitable result of ignoring God's warnings and of refusal to accept the lead of His Messengers is the fire of Hell in which disbelievers will burn.

3255. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when the guilt of disbelievers will be established and proved to the hilt they will become dumb-founded, their mouths will, as it were, become sealed and they will not be able to say anything in their defence and extenuation of their guilt, and their hands and feet will also bear witness against them—these being the principal instruments of man's actions, good or bad. Elsewhere the Qur'ān says: "Their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them" 41 : 21.

Scientific research has established the fact that every action, even every spoken word, leaves its impression and is preserved in the atmosphere. Instruments are increasingly being invented which reveal and reproduce the nature and form of action or of spoken word. The speech and movements of a person can now be exactly reproduced by the tape-recorder and

67. And if We had *so* willed, We could have put out *their* eyes, then they would have rushed *unseeing* to *find* the way. But, *in their condition*, how could they see?³²⁵⁶

68. And if We had *so* willed, We could have transformed them in their places, then they would not be able to move forward or turn back.³²⁵⁷

5 69. “And him whom We grant long life—We revert him to a weak *condition* of creation. Will they not then understand?³²⁵⁸

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ
فَأَنَّىٰ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا
مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

416 : 71.

even on the screen by television, thousands of miles away. This is how the tongue and limbs of man even in this world have begun to bear witness for or against him.

3256. Important Words :

طَمَسْنَا (We put out) is formed from طَمَسَ which means, to be far away. They say أَبْنَى طَمَسَ i.e. I do not know where he has gone. طَمَسَ الشَّيْءَ means, he destroyed or annihilated the thing or obliterated or effaced its trace. طَمَسَ النُّجُومَ means, the light of the star became extinguished. See also 10 : 89.

Commentary :

The implication of the verse seems to be that as man has been endowed with discretion and free will, he must bear the responsibility of his actions. The disbelievers persistently refuse to see the truth with the result that they become totally deprived of the power to see it. This is also the significance of the words “We shall put a seal on their mouths” in the immediately preceding verse.

3257. Important Words :

مَسَخْنَاهُمْ (We could have transformed them). They say مَسَخَهُ i.e. he transformed him into an uglier shape or form; disfigured him. مَسَخَ النَّاقَةَ means, he jaded or emaciated the she-camel by constant use. مَسَخَ الْكِتَابَ means, the writer made many mistakes in writing (Aqrab).

Commentary :

According to Ibn ‘Abbās the expression مَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ means, “We would have destroyed them in their houses” and according to Ḥasan, it signifies that all their physical and mental faculties would have become paralysed (Jarīr).

3258. Important Words :

نُكِّسْهُ (We revert him) is derived from نَكَسَ. They say نَكَسَهُ i.e. he turned it upside down; نَكَسَ الرَّجُلَ (nukisa) means, the man became weak and powerless. نَكَّسَهُ (nakkasa) means, he reversed or reverted it (Aqrab). See also 20 : 66.

Commentary :

The verse points to a very important law of nature, viz., that everything that has life is subject

70. And We have not taught him poetry, nor does it behove him to be a poet.. "It is but a Reminder and a Qur'an that makes things plain.³²⁵⁹

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا
ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

71. So that it may warn all who live, and that the word of punishment be justified against the disbelievers.³²⁶⁰

لِيُنْذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

72. Do they not see that, among the things which Our hands have fashioned, We have created for them cattle of which they are masters ?³²⁶¹

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا
أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

^a15 : 10; 65 : 11.

to decay and deterioration. The law applies as well to nations as to individuals. Like individuals, nations also develop, grow and find their full stature, and then fall a victim to decay, decrepitude and death. The verse means to say that peoples who had received new life through Divine revelation have now fallen a prey to spiritual decay and decadence. God has, therefore, decreed that another nation, the Arabs, should rise and grow on the ruins of their grandeur and glory. For that purpose He has raised a Messenger among them.

3259. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that the fact that God has intended that a nation, the Arabs, who so far had been very low in the scale of humanity should now rise to the heights of power and glory is no idle dream, no poetry. A Prophet of God, a Divine Messenger, has arisen among them who shall lead them to spiritual and material grandeur. It is inconsistent with the dignity of this great Prophet to be a poet, because whereas poets are generally given to idle dreaming and making castles in the air, the Prophets

of God have before them very high and noble ideals and programmes. The verse, however, does not mean that all poetry is bad and that all poets are dreamers but it does mean that a Divine Prophet is far too dignified and spiritually exalted to be a mere poet. The pronoun *he* in *له* can also apply to the Qur'an.

3260. Commentary :

The words "who live" mean, who are not spiritually dead, *i.e.* who are capable of receiving and accepting the Divine Message and who have the aptitude to respond to the call of truth.

3261. Commentary :

After mentioning the fact that the Holy Prophet has been raised to impart spiritual life to a dead people, the *Sūra* proceeds to give in the present and next few verses the reasons for a new revelation. When God has provided, the verses purport to say, all necessary things to meet man's physical needs and requirements, it does not stand to reason that He should have neglected to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. These verses refer to some of the things which man needs and uses most in his daily life.

73. "And We have subjected the same to them, so that some of them they use for riding and some *others* they eat.

74. "And in them they have *other* uses and *also* drinks. Will they not then be grateful?

75. And they have taken *other* gods beside Allah, that they might be helped.³²⁶²

76. "They are not able to help them. *On the contrary*, they will be brought *before God* in a body *to bear witness against them*.

77. "So let not their speech grieve thee. Verily, 'We know what they conceal and what they proclaim.'³²⁶³

78. Does not man see that 'We have created him from a *mere* sperm-drop? Then lo! he is an open quarreller!³²⁶⁴

وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبُ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّحْضَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

فَلَا يَحْزَنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا

يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ

خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

^a6 : 143; 16 : 6; 40 : 80-81. ^b16 : 6, 67. ^c7 : 193. ^d10 : 66. ^e11 : 6; 16 : 24; 27 : 75; 28 : 70.
^f18 : 38; 22 : 6; 23 : 14; 35 : 12; 40 : 68.

3262. Commentary :

The verse means to say that in spite of the fact that God has arranged to meet all the physical needs of men and has also sent a Messenger for their moral and spiritual regeneration, the disbelievers have rejected the Divine Message and have turned to false gods of their own imagination, labouring under the misconception that these gods will be of some help to them in their fight against truth. But this is an illusion because, as the next verse says, falsehood must suffer a crushing defeat, and truth must triumph and prevail in the long run.

3263. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that if disbelievers, out of perversity and waywardness, refuse to listen to the Divine Message, why should the Holy Prophet grieve over their disbelief and rejection of truth, when God knows their open plans and secret designs, and He is quite able to bring these plans to naught.

3264. Commentary :

Continuing the theme of the preceding verse, the present verse may be taken as saying to the Holy Prophet that he has no cause to grieve over his rejection by disbelievers when they, forgetting

79. And he coins similitudes for Us and forgets his own creation. He says, ^a“Who can quicken the bones when they are decayed?”³²⁶⁵

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خُلُقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي
الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ^{٤٩}

80. ^bSay, ‘He, Who created them the first time, will quicken them; and He knows full well *the condition* of every created thing ;

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ
خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ^{٥٠}

81. ^c“He Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, and behold, you kindle from it.”³²⁶⁶

إِلَّا الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا
أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ^{٥١}

82. ^d“Has not He Who created the heavens and the earth the power to create the like of them? Yea, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing.”³²⁶⁷

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ^{٥٢}

^a19 : 67; 23 : 38; 45 : 25. ^b17 : 52; 46 : 34; 75 : 41. ^c56 : 72, 73. ^d17 : 100; 46 : 34; 86 : 9.

their insignificant origin, have the hardihood even to doubt and dispute God's own Almightyness. This is one meaning of the verse. But this and the next two verses may also constitute an answer to those disbelievers who doubt the possibility of a spiritually dead people rising to a new and vigorous life. Or these verses may point to the inevitability of Resurrection, saying that when God can raise a dead people like the Arabs to new life through the Holy Prophet, He does certainly possess the power to give new life to dead and decayed bones.

3265. Important Words :

رميم (decayed) is derived from رَم. They say رَمَ الْعِظَمَ i.e. the bone became old and decayed. رَمَ الْأَمْرَ means, he repaired or mended the affair.

رميم means, an old and decayed bone (Aqrab & Lane).

3266. Commentary :

The reference in the words “green tree” seems to be to the resinous trees whose branches get easily ignited and catch fire when friction is caused by the blowing of the wind, the implication being that just as fire is caused by friction between the branches of a tree, even so does new spiritual life result when spiritually weak people come in contact with a Prophet of God or a Divine Reformer.

3267. Important Words :

The personal pronoun هم in مِثْلَهُمْ refers to those people who doubt Resurrection and not to heavens and earth.

83. "Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is *only* that He says to it, 'Be!', and it comes into being.³²⁶⁸

84. So Holy is He, 'in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things. And to Him will you *all* be brought back.'³²⁶⁹

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٣﴾

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ

تَرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

^a2 : 118; 3 : 48; 40 : 69. ^b23 : 89.

3268. Commentary :

Wherever in the Qur'ān the expression "when He intends a thing, He says to it, 'Be' and it comes into being" is used, the reference invariably is to the occurrence of an event of exceptional importance, particularly to the coming into being of a great moral and spiritual revolution through a Divine Reformer. In the verse under comment also the reference is to the great change which was wrought by the Holy Prophet. The *Sūra* deals with the Holy

Prophet's Message and opened with an address to him.

3269. Commentary :

The significance of the verse is that as God Who is the Creator of heavens and earth and in Whose hands lies the kingdom and control of everything, has sent the Holy Prophet, the progress and success of his mission can never be arrested or retarded, nor can God's plans be thwarted or frustrated.

CHAPTER 37

AL - Ş Ā F F Ā T

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Place of Revelation

Baihaqī and Ibn Mardawaih report Ibn ‘Abbas as saying that the *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca. According to Qurṭubī the consensus of scholarly opinion regards the *Sūra* as of Meccan origin, having been revealed very early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Its style and subject-matter also support this view. The *Sūra* takes its title from the opening words of the second verse.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

In the preceding *Sūra* the Holy Prophet was called “the Perfect Leader” who was given the Qur’ān as an infallible guide for the whole of humanity till the end of time. In the beginning of the present *Sūra* we are told that this “Perfect Leader” will, with the help of the Qur’ān and by his own noble example, succeed in bringing into being a community of righteous men, who by their words and deeds will bear witness to the Unity of God and, by their indefatigable endeavours and noble conduct, will preach and establish that doctrine in Arabia and will carry the light of Islam to the ends of the earth. They will count no sacrifice too great to establish God’s glory and praises in the world.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with a firm Divine declaration that under the fostering care of the Holy Prophet—“the Perfect Leader”—a community of noble and righteous men will be born who not only themselves will glorify God and sing His praises—so much so that the sandy wilderness of Arabia will reverberate with them—but by precept and example prevent others also from idol-worship and evil practices, till the Unity of God will become firmly established in Arabia and from there the light of Islam will spread to the ends of the earth.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that whenever there comes a Prophet of God in the world the forces of darkness seek to obstruct the spread of the message of truth by misrepresenting and misinterpreting it or by misquoting the Prophet and tearing a passage out of his revelation and mixing much falsehood with it. But they completely fail in their evil designs, and truth continues to make progress. The *Sūra* further says that when disbelievers are told that the teachings of the Qur’ān will

bring about a great change in Arabia and the spiritually dead Arabs will not only receive a new life but having received it themselves will impart it to others, the disbelievers jeer and scoff at the idea and call it the ravings of a maniac and the phenomenon as outside the bounds of possibility like the coming into life of those who are physically dead. The *Sūra* replies to the firm denial of the disbelievers of this phenomenon with a still firmer affirmation that such a thing will certainly come to pass and when it came to pass they will suffer disgrace and humiliation and that will be the time of the final decision for them. Next, we are told that when heavenly punishment overtakes the guilty people, the leaders of disbelief and their followers blame and condemn each other, but their mutual condemnation and recrimination prove to be of no avail. And as both the parties are equally to blame, therefore, both equally share the punishment for calling the Prophet a liar and a maniac and for rejecting him.

After this the *Sūra* gives a brief description of the heavenly blessings that will be bestowed upon the righteous and chosen servants of God. It says that they will be seated on thrones, in the Gardens of Bliss, and will be served with fruits and drinks of various tastes which will cause no headache or intoxication and that they will have beautiful consorts and faithful and loyal companions. This description of heavenly blessings and bounties, to be bestowed on the believers, is followed by an account of the punishment which will be meted out to the rejectors of truth and persecutors of God's Prophets. They will be given the tree of *Zaqqūm* to eat and boiling water to slake their thirst and their ultimate abode will be Hell. Such is always the end of those who refuse to listen to truth and reject it and this is the supreme lesson which is writ large on the pages of history.

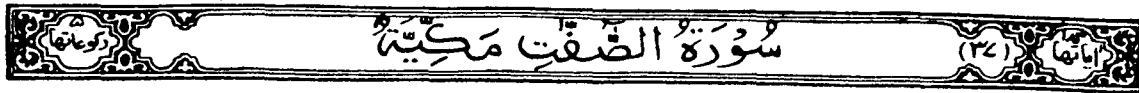
Next, the *Sūra* gives a few illustrations from the lives of Divine Prophets to show that the cause of truth never fails and its rejection is never productive of good results. The illustrations given are from the lives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ilyās, Jonas and Lot. We are told that in extremely adverse circumstances and against heavy odds, Noah succeeded in his mission. His enemies were destroyed by the Flood and his followers saved, and he was remembered with love and respect by the generations that followed. Abraham came after Noah. He was born among a people who blindly worshipped images and stones. Being an uncompromising iconoclast he carried on a relentless campaign against idolatry. He told his people that as their gods did not listen to their prayers they were of no use to them. He broke the idols in order to bring home to them the futility and folly of idol-worship and to make them realise that those gods who could not save themselves from being broken into pieces would not be able to help them in case of need. In this way Abraham sought to wean his people away from their idolatry. But the forces of evil would not accept defeat. They made common cause against Abraham and sought to cast him into the fire. But he remained safe and they were frustrated in their plans against him. Besides, God blessed him with two sons—Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was faced with a severe trial. In fulfilment of his vision Abraham prepared himself to slaughter him, then his only son. He asked Ishmael if he was ready to give his life to fulfil the Divine command. Ishmael did not evince the least hesitancy in laying down his life. "The only answer he gave to his father's query was in words full of pathos. "My father," he said. "do as thou

art commanded, God willing, thou wilt find me of those who are steadfast in their faith." But God had willed otherwise. Abraham was told that he had already fulfilled his vision and had carried out the Divine command and that he should slaughter a ram instead of sacrificing Ishmael. This noble act of Abraham and Ishmael stands as a unique and imperishable testimony to the goodness and greatness of both the father and the son. They secured a certificate of Divine pleasure embodied in the words; "they were among Our believing servants."

Abraham's account is followed by a brief reference to Moses and Aaron—how God saved them and their people from the clutches of Pharaoh and how the wicked tyrant was drowned with his mighty hosts before their very eyes and how as a reward for their steadfast loyalty in the face of grave trials, God blessed Moses and Aaron with a Book which was a great source of spiritual light and guidance for the Israelites. Next are mentioned Ilyās and Lot and last of all a somewhat detailed description is given of Prophet Jonah. We are told that Jonah fled from his people because they rejected his Message, and sailed in a boat full of passengers. He was thrown overboard and was swallowed by a fish which later on disgorged him on a bare tract of land. He then went back to his people who eventually believed in him.

After giving a brief account of some of the Divine Prophets and their enemies with the object of showing that those who seek to frustrate God's plans and thwart His designs meet with frustration and failure and that truth eventually triumphs and prospers, the *Sūra*, in the concluding verses, winds up its central theme—the repudiation and condemnation of idol-worship, particularly, the worship of angels. The idol-worshippers are reprimanded that they are foolish enough not to understand the simple fact that the ascription of Divine powers and attributes to weak human beings or to forces of nature or even to angels who themselves are created beings offends against human reason, commonsense and conscience. They are further told that the angels are only God's creatures who have specific duties to perform and who praise God and glorify Him.

The *Sūra* ends on the note that it is an unalterable Divine decree that when forces of darkness are pitted against God's Prophets and His chosen servants, the latter receive Divine succour, and being God's own chosen servants succeed in their mission, while the votaries of Satan meet with defeat and discomfiture. This fact has been proved again and again in the lives of Divine Messengers and it leads to but one conclusion that "all praise belongs to God, the Lord of all the worlds."



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³²⁷⁰

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

الْمَزْمُورِ

2. By those who range themselves in close ranks,³²⁷¹

وَالصَّفَّتِ صَفًّا ②

3. And they drive away the enemy vigorously,³²⁷²

فَالزَّجِرَتِ زَجْرًا ③

^aSee 1 : 1.

3270. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3271. Important Words :

و (by) means, also; then; while; during; at the same time, together; with; but; however. It is also syn. with رَب (rubba) i.e. frequently; sometimes, perhaps. It is also a particle of swearing meaning, 'by' or 'I swear' or 'I cite as witness.' (Aqrab & Lane). و has been used in the present and the next two verses in the sense of 'by' or 'I swear' or 'I cite as witness.'

The words الصافات صفا (who range themselves in close ranks) may signify: (1) Muslims standing in close rows behind their Imām in the five daily Prayers, or (2) Muslims who stand in battle array facing the enemy.

For a collective explanatory note on this and the next two verses see v. 4.

Commentary :

In this and the next two verses, God has sworn by certain beings or things or has cited them as witnesses. Ordinarily, when a person takes an oath his object is to supply

the deficiency of insufficient testimony or to add weight or conviction to his assertion. In fact, by so doing he calls God to witness that he speaks the truth, when there is no witness in the case. But such is not the case with the Quranic oaths. When the Qur'ān adopts such a form the truth of the statement it makes is not sought to be proved by a mere allegation but by a solid argument implied in the oath itself. Sometimes, these oaths refer to the obvious laws of nature and by implication draw attention to what may be inferred from what is obvious. Another object of a Quranic oath is to make a prophecy the fulfilment of which establishes its truth. For a collective note on this and the next verse see v. 4 below.

3272. Important Words :

الزاجرات زجرا (who drive away the enemy vigorously) may signify: (a) Muslims who wage a relentless war against their evil passions; or (b) Muslims who fight and drive away the enemy of Islam vigorously or (c) the custodians of law and order.

4. *And they recite the Reminder—the Qur'ān*³²⁷³

5. *“Surely, your God is One,*³²⁷⁴

6. *Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and the Lord of the sun's risings.*³²⁷⁵

قَالَتِلِّيتِ ذِكْرًا ۝

إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۝

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ

الْمَشَارِقِ ۝

45 : 74; 16 : 23; 22 : 35.

b19 : 66; 38 : 67; 44 : 8; 78 : 38.

3273. Important Words :

التاليات ذكرًا (who recite the Reminder—the Qur'ān) may refer to Muslims reciting regularly the Qur'ān.

Commentary :

The description given in this and the preceding two verses may apply to believers and as such the clause, “those who range themselves in close rows,” may signify believers who stand in rows behind their Imām in the five daily Prayers or those who stand in battle array facing the enemy. The next verse, “and they drive away the enemy vigorously,” may refer to believers who wage a veritable war against their own passions, and keep them under restraint, or to believers who hold the enemy effectively in check. And the words “and they recite the Reminder—the Qur'ān” may mean Muslims who recite the Qur'ān and remember God and glorify Him in the day and night Prayers, or even when they are engaged in fighting against the enemy.

These verses read in conjunction with the verse that follows embody both a prophecy and a statement of fact. As a statement of fact they signify that there live in all times and among every people a group of righteous and God-fearing Muslims who, by word and deed and by precept

and practice, bear testimony to the great truth viz., *إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ* i.e. God is one.

As a prophecy, however, the verses signify that though at present the whole of Arabia is sunk deep in idol-worship and moral turpitude but a community of the Faithful will soon be born who not only will themselves glorify God and sing His praises and make the whole country resound with their hosannas but will also succeed in establishing Divine Unity in the land.

These verses may have yet another interpretation, viz., that if a representative gathering of the learned men of various Faiths were held in a peaceful atmosphere and the basic religious principles were discussed and debated impartially and dispassionately in a calm atmosphere, under the supervision of the custodian of law and order, the inevitable outcome of the deliberations of such a gathering will be the affirmation of the doctrine that “God is One.”

3274. Commentary :

See preceding verse.

3275. Commentary :

مَشَارِقُ (sun's risings) being the plural of *مَشَارِقُ* which means, the place where the sun rises; the words *رَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ* may signify that God is the Lord, the Source and Centre of every kind of light, or the implied reference in the words “the Lord of sun's risings” may be to the spread of

7. ^aWe have adorned the lowest heaven with an adornment—the planets;³²⁷⁶

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ ۝٤

8. ^bAnd have guarded it against all rebellious satans.³²⁷⁷

وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ ۝٥

^a15 : 17; 41 : 13; 67 : 6.

^b15 : 18; 41 : 13; 67 : 6.

Islam first in eastern countries, then from there to other parts of the world.

3276. Commentary :

It is not only the beautiful appearance of planets and stars at night that is meant here. It would be too trivial for a Divine revealed Book to make special mention, merely of the ornamental character of these heavenly bodies. They serve another very useful spiritual purpose. In fact, the verse points to a parallelism between the physical and spiritual realms, viz., that just as physical heaven is sustained by physical planets and stars, so is spiritual heaven sustained by their spiritual counterparts who are the Prophets and Divine Reformers. Each one of them serves as an ornament for the spiritual heaven, as the stars and planets beautify and embellish the physical heaven.

3277. Important Words :

مارد (rebellious) is active participle from مرَد which means, he exalted himself; he was insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of disobedience; he was excessively proud or rebellious; he was refractory; he outstripped others in pride or disobedience; مارد therefore means, rebellious, excessively proud, insolently disobedient (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The analogy between the physical and spiri-

tual systems, which was begun in the preceding verse, is continued in the present one. We are here told that just as each star serves as an ornament for the physical heaven and guards it by gravitation and other means which are yet unknown to man, similarly every Prophet is an ornament for the spiritual heaven, and by appearing at a time when his presence is urgently needed, helps to guard the same. Moreover, every Prophet fights and routs those wicked people who seek to distort the Word of God and frustrate His designs. The word “satans” in the verse refers to disbelievers who refuse to obey their Prophet and seek to make spiritual progress independently of him. Against such people the doors of spiritual heaven are firmly barred.

‘Satans’ who carry on a wicked campaign against the Word of God are of two categories: (a) Internal enemies of the Muslim Community such as “the Hypocrites,” etc. They are called شيطان مارد (the rebellious satan) in the Qur’ān and (b) external enemies or disbelievers who are described in the Qur’ān as شيطان رجيم (satan, the rejected). The words شيطان مارد (rebellious satan) may also refer to astrologers and soothsayers who in time of spiritual darkness before the advent of a Divine Reformer, ply their evil trade and to a certain extent succeed in deceiving simple-minded people.

9. ^aThey cannot listen to *anything* from the exalted assembly of *angels*— and they are pelted from every side,³²⁷⁸

لَا يَسْتَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَاِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَذَفُونَ مِنْ
كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۝٩

10. Repulsed, and for them is a perpetual punishment—³²⁷⁹

دُحُورًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ ۝١٠

11. ^bBut he who snatches away *something* by stealth, there pursues him a piercing flame of *fire*.³²⁸⁰

إِلَّا مَنْ خَطَفَ الْخُطْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ۝١١

^a26 : 112-113.

^b15 : 19; 97 : 6.

3278. Commentary :

The verse means to say that all the tall claims of astrologers and soothsayers that they have access to the secrets of the unknown are false and unfounded. They do not and cannot have access to well-guarded Divine secrets (15 : 10). It further appears from the Qur‘ān that none can know the Word of God until it is revealed to a Prophet (72 : 27-28). If it were possible for “satans” to have access to things that are under the special protection of God such as His Word, etc., then its very sanctity and inviolability would have become subject to serious doubts. In fact, Divine secrets are God’s specially guarded preserve to which satans can have no access (26 : 213) and which are made known only to God’s chosen servants and His Elect.

3279. Important Words :

دحورا (repulsed) is derived from دحر. They say دحره *i.e.* He (God) drove him away; expelled or banished him; expelled him with ignominy. دحور means, driven away, rejected or cast away (Lane & Aqrab).

واصب (perpetual) is active participle from وصب which means, it continued; was constant; was fixed; settled or firm. وصب على الامر means, he kept, attended or applied himself constantly perseveringly, or assiduously to the thing and

managed it or conducted it well. واسب, therefore would mean, perpetual, constant, permanent (Lane & Aqrab). See also 16 : 53.

3280. Important Words :

ثاقب (piercing) is derived from ثقب. They say ثقب الشيء *i.e.* he pierced the thing, made a small hole in it. ثقب الكوكب means, the star shone brightly as though it pierced through the darkness. ثقب رأيه means, his judgment was penetrating. ثاقب means a star, a lamp, fire; a flame or a shooting star shining brightly or things piercing through the darkness and dispelling it (Lane & Aqrab).

For شهاب see 15 : 19.

Commentary :

The words, “But he who snatches away something by stealth,” signify that as long as the Word of God is preserved in the heavens it is quite safe and secure against all interference, stealing or snatching, but after it is revealed to a Prophet, “satans,” or the enemies of God’s Prophets, seek to misrepresent or misinterpret it by misquoting the Prophet or by tearing a passage out of his revelation and mixing falsehood with it, or they even try to represent the Prophet’s teaching as their own.

12. So ask them whether it is they who are harder to create, or those *others* whom We have created? «Them We have created of cohesive clay.³²⁸¹

13. Nay, thou dost wonder, and they ridicule.³²⁸²

14. And when they are admonished, they pay no heed.

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهْمُ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا

خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ ۝١٢

بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ۝١٣

وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ۝١٤

46 : 3; 23: 13 ; 32 : 8 ; 38 : 72.

The expression, “then there pursues him a piercing flame of fire,” signifies that during the time when there is no Prophet or Divine Reformer in the world, satans, to a certain extent, succeed in hoodwinking simple-minded people, but with the coming of a Prophet or a Divine Reformer their falsehood becomes exposed and people can easily see the truth. شهاب ثاقب may represent the Prophet of the day or the ever-living Prophet *i.e.* the Holy Prophet, from among whose followers Divine Reformers continue to bring to naught the wicked designs of “satans” seeking to tamper with the teachings of Islam.

The verse may also be taken as referring to the physical phenomenon of the falling of meteors at the time of the appearance of a Prophet or a great Divine Reformer. In the time of the Holy Prophet, meteors fell in such large numbers that disbelievers thought that both heaven and earth were about to fall asunder (Kathīr, under 72 : 9). From the Ḥadīth it appears that in the time of Jesus also meteors fell in unusually large numbers. With regard to his Second Coming the Gospels say: And there shall be the signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars (Matt. 24: 29). Meteors also fell in exceptionally large numbers in 1885 when Aḥmad, the Holy Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement, was about to announce his claim to be the Promised Messiah

and Mahdī. For a detailed discussion of شهاب (bright flame) and شهاب ثاقب (piercing flame) see 15 : 19.

3281. Important Words :

لازب (cohesive) is active participle from لزب which means, it was or remained fixed, settled, firm or constant; it (mud) cohered, and became hard. لازب means, adhering or adhesive or cohesive clay or mud; being or remaining fixed, settled, firm, or constant (Lane).

In the word مَنْ (whom) the allusion may be to those righteous Companions of the Holy Prophet to whom reference has been made in vv. 2-5 above. In this sense of the word the verse under comment would mean that the doubters and deniers of truth can bear no comparison with those true and noble Companions of the Holy Prophet who have been created of cohesive clay *i.e.* they are of firm and strong character.

3282. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the coming into being of a company of truly righteous and God-fearing men through the Holy Prophet and the establishment of Islam on a firm footing in Arabia is indeed a marvel to wonder at even by the Prophet himself. The disbelievers, as is their wont, ridicule the possibility ever of such an event taking place.

15. And when they see a Sign, they seek to ridicule it.³²⁸³

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ۝١٥

16. And they say, 'This is nothing but plain magic.

وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝١٦

17. ^b'What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?³²⁸⁴

ءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا إِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ۝١٧

18. 'And our forefathers of yore also?'

أَوِ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۝١٨

19. Say, 'Yea; and you will then be abased.'³²⁸⁵

قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ۝١٩

20. Then it will be but 'one shout of reproach, and lo! they will begin to see.'³²⁸⁶

فَإِن تَأْخُذْهُ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۝٢٠

21. And they will say, 'Alas for us! this is the Day of Requital.'

وَقَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا هَذَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ۝٢١

^a23 : 84 ; 27 : 69.

^b13 : 6; 27 : 68; 50 : 4.

^c79 : 14.

3283. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that though the disbelievers will witness many Signs yet they will not profit by them, on the contrary, they will mock and jeer at them.

3284. Commentary :

"Resurrection" referred to in this verse may mean Resurrection after death or it may mean the great moral transformation brought about by the Holy Prophet. The verse purports to say that when disbelievers are told that they will have to account for their rejection of the teaching of Islam about the next life they say that they cannot believe that such a thing can ever happen, and with respect to the great change that Islam is destined to bring about in the lives of men, their denial, too, is firm and unequivocal.

3285. Important Words :

داخرون (abased) is the plural of داخر which is active participle from دخر (*dakhara & dakhira*) which means, he was or became abject, mean, contemptible, despicable or abased (Lane).

The verse replies to the firm denial by disbelievers of the possibility of Resurrection after death or of "resurrection" of the morally and spiritually dead Arabs mentioned in the preceding two verses with even a firmer affirmation that such a thing shall certainly come to pass, and, besides being disgraced on the Judgment Day, their pride will be humbled in the dust in this very life.

3286. Commentary :

The verse, besides the Judgment Day, may refer to the sudden and swift punishment that will overtake disbelievers. The reference seems to be to the Fall of Mecca

22. *God will say* ^a‘This is the Day of the *final* Decision which you used to deny.’³²⁸⁷

R 2 23. ^b*And it will be said to the angels, ‘Assemble those who acted wrongfully, along with their companions, and what they used to worship*³²⁸⁸

24. ‘Beside Allah; and lead them to the path of Hell;

25. ‘And stop them; for they must be questioned.’³²⁸⁹

26. *They will be asked, ‘What is the matter with you that you help not one another ?’*³²⁹⁰

27. Nay, on that day they will surrender themselves completely.³²⁹¹

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۝٢٢

أَحْشِرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ۝٢٣

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَأَهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَيِّمِ ۝٢٤

وَقِفُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ ۝٢٥

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنَاصَرُونَ ۝٢٦

بَلْ هُمْ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ۝٢٧

^a46 : 35; 52 : 15.

^b6 : 23; 10 : 29.

when the Meccans were simply flabbergasted at the sudden appearance of the Muslim army at its very gates.

3287. **Commentary :**

It was at the fall of Mecca that disbelievers realised to their sorrow that that was the day of final decision for which they had waited so long because after the fall of Mecca within a very short time the whole of Arabia submitted to the inevitable and entered the fold of Islam.

3288. **Commentary :**

The present and the following several verses describe the condition respectively of believers and disbelievers in this and the next life. With this verse begins a description of the guilty disbelievers and their companions, comrades and associates. They are described as being hauled up and led to their place of punishment. The words “what they used to worship” refer

to those leaders of disbelief to whom they gave blind and unquestioning obedience.

3289. **Commentary :**

Before being actually punished the guilty will be asked to show cause why they should not be punished, or, if they had anything to say in defence or extenuation of their guilt, to produce it.

3290. **Commentary :**

The realisation of utter helplessness of the guilty people to assist each other will be brought home to them.

3291. **Commentary :**

The verse portrays the complete surrender and submission to Divine Judgment of the guilty leaders and also of their beguiled and deceived followers. They will offer no defence but will only indulge in mutual recrimination as the following verses show.

28. And some of them will address the others, 'questioning one another.

29. They will say, 'Verily, you used to come to us, from the right.'³²⁹²

30. *Their associate-gods* will answer, ^b'Nay, you yourselves were not believers.'³²⁹³

31. "And we had no power over you; but you yourselves were a transgressing people.

32. 'Now the word of our Lord has been proved true against us that we shall surely taste *the punishment*.

33. 'And we caused you to go astray for we ourselves had gone astray.'³²⁹⁴

34. Truly, on that day they will all be sharers in the punishment.

35. Surely, thus do We deal with the guilty:

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۝٣٨

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ۝٣٩

قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝٤٠

وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا

ظَالِمِينَ ۝٤١

فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ۖ إِنَّا لَذَائِقُونَ ۝٤٢

فَأَعْوَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَاوِينَ ۝٤٣

فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ۝٤٤

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْجَارِمِينَ ۝٤٥

^a34 : 32; ^b34 : 33.

^c14 : 23; 15 : 43.

3292. Important Words :

اليمين (the right) is derived from يمين. They say يمين الرجل *i.e.* he came from the right side of the man. يمين means, right hand or right side; good luck; power. They say فلان عندنا باليمين *i.e.* such a one holds a good position with us (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse, besides the meaning given in the text, may also mean: "you came to us exerting your power and influence and compelling us to obey and follow you."

The words 'the right side' may also signify religion, and the verse would thus mean, "you masqueraded under the cloak of religion to deceive us."

The pronoun 'they' in the expression "they will say" refers to common disbelievers.

3293. Commentary :

In this verse the pronoun 'they' in the sentence "they will answer" refers to the leaders of disbelief.

3294. Commentary :

In vv. 30, 31 above the leaders of disbelief had refused to plead guilty to the charge that they had led their followers astray by saying that they had no power or authority over them; in the verse under comment they plead guilty to the charge of misleading them. The seeming contradiction is, in reality, no contradiction. The verse means to say that leaders of disbelief will say to

36. For when it was said to them, 'There is no god but Allah,' they turned away with disdain,

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. And said, 'Shall we give up our gods for a "mad poet"?

وَيَقُولُونَ آيَاتُ لَتَارِكُو آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. Nay, he has brought the truth and has testified to the truth of *all* the Messengers;³²⁹⁵

بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. You shall surely taste the painful punishment;³²⁹⁶

إِنَّكُمْ لَذَاقُوا الْعَذَابِ الْآلِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. ^bAnd you will be requited only for what you have wrought—

وَمَا تَجْزُونَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. Save the chosen servants of Allah;³²⁹⁷

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

42. These will have a known provision;³²⁹⁸

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَعْلُومٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

^a15 : 7; 44 : 15; 68 : 52.

^b36 : 55; 45 : 29.

their followers : "You yourselves chose to follow us, and since we ourselves had gone astray, you could expect nothing better from us. It was a case of blind leading the blind."

that they are going to be punished for rejecting his Message, but the rejection of the ravings of a maniac or the meaningless vapourings of a poet can cause no harm to anybody.

3295. **Commentary :**

3297. **Commentary :**

The verse constitutes an effective reply to the charge that the Holy Prophet is a poet or a madman. It purports to say that the Prophet fulfils in his person all the prophecies made by the Israelite Prophets about his advent and the Qur'ān contains all that was imperishable and of permanent value in the former revealed Scriptures. How could a madman or a poet do all this?

From this verse begins a description of the rewards of Paradise that the believers will receive in the next life and also of the great Divine boons and blessings that were bestowed upon the righteous Companions of the Holy Prophet in this very life.

3296. **Commentary :**

3298. **Commentary :**

The verse embodies another argument that the Holy Prophet is not a madman or a poet but a true Messenger of God. It warns disbelievers

The words رِزْقٌ مَعْلُومٌ (a known provision) signify that the Muslims knew beforehand that they would receive Divine favours mentioned in the following verses since they were repeatedly promised those blessings.

43. ^aFruits ; and they shall be honoured,³²⁹⁹

فَوَاكِهٌ وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

44. ^bIn the Gardens of Bliss,

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٣٤﴾

45. ^cSeated on thrones, facing one another.³³⁰⁰

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

46. ^dThey will be served round with a cup from a flowing fountain,^{3300A}

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. *Sparkling* white, delicious to the drinkers,

بَيضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. ^eWherein there will be no intoxication, nor will they be exhausted thereby.³³⁰¹

لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْفَوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾

49. ^fAnd with them will be *chaste* women, with restrained looks *and* large beautiful eyes.³³⁰²

وَعِنْدَهُمْ قُصِرَتُ الظُّرُفِ عَيْنٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a52 : 23; 55 : 53; 56 : 21.

^b44 : 53; 68 : 35; 78 : 33.

^c56 : 16-17.

^d56 : 19.

^e56 : 20.

^f55 : 57.

3299. Commentary :

The word "fruits" signifies that the blessings mentioned in the following verses will be the fruit of right beliefs and good actions of the believers.

3300. Important Words :

سُرُر (thrones) or أَسْرَة is the plural of سَرِير which is derived from سَر. They say سَره *i.e.* he or it made him happy. سَرِير means, a couch-frame; a bed-stead; a raised couch ; a throne. It also signifies a bier; dominion, authority, sovereignty; comfort or affluence. The Arabs say زَال عَنْ سَرِيره *i.e.* he ceased to enjoy authority, power or comfort or affluence (Lane & Aqrab).

3300A. Important Words :

كَؤُوس (cup) of which the plural is كُؤُوسَات means, a drinking cup containing wine or

a cup full of wine or wine itself. They say سَقَاهُ كَأْسًا مِنْ الذَّل *i.e.* he gave him to drink a cup of abasement *i.e.* he abased him (Lane).

3301. Important Words :

غَوْل (intoxication) is derived from غَال. They say غَاله *i.e.* he or it destroyed him; or it seized him or took him away unawares. اغْتَاله الخمر means, the wine deprived him of his reason. غَوْل means, far extent of a desert; the evil result of headache; headache or intoxication; deprivation of intellectual faculties (Lane & Aqrab).

3302. Important Words :

عَيْن (women having large beautiful eyes) is the plural of عَيْنَاء which means, a woman having large beautiful eyes. It also means a good or beautiful word or saying. اَرْضُ عَيْنَاء means, green or black earth (Lane & Aqrab).

50. ^aAs though they were sheltered eggs.³³⁰³

51. Then some of them will address the others, questioning one another.

52. A speaker from among them will say, "I had a companion,"³³⁰⁴

53. "Who used to say, 'Art thou indeed among those who believe *it* to be true?'³³⁰⁵

54. ^b"When we are dead, and have become dust and bones, shall we indeed be requited?"³³⁰⁶

55. *The speaker will then ask, 'Will you have a look at him?'*³³⁰⁷

56. Then he will look and see him in the midst of the Fire.³³⁰⁸

كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

يَقُولُ أَتَيْكَ لَمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

قَالَ هَلْ أُنْتُمْ مُّظْلَعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

فَأَطَّلَعَ فَرَأَاهُ فِي سَوَاءٍ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾

^a55 : 59. ^b13 : 6; 27 : 68; 50 : 4; 56 : 48.

3303. Commentary :

History bears testimony to the fact that Muslims were endowed with all the blessings mentioned in the foregoing verses. They had gardens of bliss; they sat on thrones and enjoyed power and dominion; they had all the innocent pleasures of life; they had beautiful chaste women as their spouses and, over and above all this, "God was well pleased with them and they were well-pleased with Him" (58 : 23). This was their greatest achievement.

3304. Commentary :

From this verse begins the description of the state of mind of a dweller of Paradise—a true believer—after he has seen an erstwhile companion of his burning in the fire of Hell. The following verses also describe the conditions of the believers and the disbelievers after they meet their destiny.

3205. Commentary :

The verse shows that the disbeliever in Hell used to scoff and jeer at his companion in the present life for having been a believer.

3306. Commentary :

The disbeliever used to mock at the idea that there was a life after death and that man after having been reduced to dust and ashes would ever come to life again.

3307. Commentary :

The subject of the verb قَالَ (will ask) is the inmate of Paradise referred to in v. 52 above. He will ask other inmates of Paradise if they would like to have a look at his former disbelieving companion.

3308. Important Words :

جَحِيم (Fire) is derived from جَحِم . They say جَحِمَتِ النَّارُ i.e. the fire burned; burned brightly

57. He will say to him, 'By Allah, thou didst almost cause me to perish.

58. 'And had it not been for the favour of my Lord, I should surely have been of those who are called up *before Him*.

59. 'Is it *not so that* we are not going to die *again*,³³⁰⁹

60. ^a"Save our previous death, and that we are not to be punished?

61. ^bSurely, this is the supreme triumph.³³¹⁰

62. For the like of this, then, let the workers work.³³¹¹

63. Is that better as an entertainment, or 'the tree of Zaqqūm'?³³¹²

قَالَ تَأَلَّهَ إِنَّ كِدْتَ لَتُرْدِينَ^{٥٧}

وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ^{٥٨}

أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ^{٥٩}

إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ^{٦٠}

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ^{٦١}

لِيُثَلَّ هَذَا أَفَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعِبَادُونَ^{٦٢}

أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ^{٦٣}

^a23 : 38; 44 : 36.

^b44-58; 61 : 13.

^c44: 44; 56 : 53.

or fiercely. جحيم العين means, he opened the eyes. جحيم therefore means, a fire burning or blazing or flaming vehemently; a vehemently hot place; any great fire in a pit (Lane & Aqrab).

3309. **Commentary :**

The believer in Paradise is here mentioned as referring to the great destiny of man—his eternal life. He says that man will not suffer death after his departure from this world. His spiritual journey to Eternity will know no end or retreat. It will be one continuous and eternal progress. This same subject has also been dealt with in 44 : 57. where it is stated: "they will not taste death therein, other than the first death. And He will save them from the punishment of the blazing fire." The verse under comment may also mean that the believer in Paradise will say to his disbelieving companion in Hell that the latter must have now realized that he was wrong

in believing that after having been reduced to dust and bones, man will not be given a new life. He will repeat the words of his companion in the previous life who used to say that there would be no prolonged punishment after death.

3310. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that man's greatest achievement and the fulfilment of his highest destiny lies in enjoying eternal life and making incessant and everlasting spiritual progress.

3311. **Commentary :**

The words of this and the preceding verse may also be taken as having been spoken by God Himself.

3312. **Important Words :**

زقوم (Zaqqūm) is derived from زقم. They say زقم اللبن i.e. he swallowed it and devoured it. زقم means, he drank much milk. زقوم is a dust-

64. Verily, We have made it a trial for the wrongdoers.³³¹³

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. It is a tree that springs forth in the bottom of Hell;³³¹⁴

إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. The fruit thereof is as though it were the heads of serpents.³³¹⁵

طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. "And they shall eat of it and fill their bellies therewith.

فَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَكُونُونَ مِنْهَا فَالِقُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. Then will they have in addition to it a mixture of boiling water to drink.³³¹⁶

ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. Then surely their return shall be to Hell.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَا إِلَى الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦٩﴾

70. ^bThey indeed found their fathers erring,

إِنَّهُمْ الْفَوَا أَبَاءَهُمْ ضَالِّينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

^a56 : 54.

^b7 : 174.

coloured tree which has a pungent odour and is bitter and has stinking leaves. The word also means, any deadly food; the food of the people of Hell (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Zaqqūm in the verse under comment denotes the tree of disbelief. The Qur'ān has compared true belief to a good tree which brings forth its fruit at all times (14 : 25-26) and disbelief to an evil tree—*Zaqqūm*. Taking it in the sense of deadly food, the verse would mean that the fruit of the accursed tree of disbelief is deadly and its eating brings about spiritual death. The word has been used in the same sense and in the same context at two other places in the Qur'ān, viz. 44 : 44,45,46 & 56 : 53,54,55.

3313. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the evil tree of

disbelief has always proved a great source of mischief for men.

3314. Commentary :

The implication of the verse seems to be that eating of the tree of disbelief leads men to the bottom of Hell.

3315. Commentary :

The metaphorical description of *Zaqqūm* continues in the present verse.

3316. Important Words :

شوبا (mixture) is derived from شاب. They say 'شاب الشيء' i.e. he mixed the thing with water; he adulterated it. شاب الرجل means, he deceived the man and defrauded him, he acted treacherously; he deceived in buying or selling. شوب means, anything mixed, mixture; a medley; heat; honey; a piece of dough (Aqrab & Lane).

71. "And they hurried on in their footsteps."³³¹⁷

فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَثَرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

72. And most of the ancient peoples had erred before them,

وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

73. And We had sent Warners among them.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

74. Behold, then; how *evil* was the end of those who were warned.³³¹⁸

فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

75. Save the chosen servants of Allah.

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

R. 3 76. And Noah indeed did cry unto Us, and what excellent answer do We give to prayers!³³¹⁹

وَلَقَدْ نَادَيْنَا نُوْحًا فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

43 : 24.

3317. Important Words :

For يهرعون (hurried on) see 11 : 79.

Commentary :

Men are generally slaves to old usages, traditions and customs. Time-worn ideas and prejudices die hard. Perhaps the greatest obstacle in the way of acceptance of truth by the people, as repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān, is their strong disinclination to accept new ideas. Man is by nature slow to change. This seems to be the significance of this verse.

3318. Commentary :

The lesson is writ large on the face of history that God's Messengers appeared among all peoples, that the Divine Message was invariably received with ridicule and mockery, and that the rejectors of truth were always punished. It is to this supreme lesson of history that the attention

of disbelievers is repeatedly drawn in the words of the Qur'ān, "Behold, how evil was the end of those who were warned." Yet such is the tragedy of human affairs that disbelievers do not benefit by the fate of their disbelieving predecessors.

3319. Commentary :

The supreme lesson of history to which reference has been made in the preceding verses and which has been summed up in the last but one verse, viz., that truth ultimately triumphs and its rejectors come to grief, has been exemplified in the lives of Divine Messengers, a brief description of whose life-story begins with this verse and is continued in the following verses. The account of these Prophets begins with the history of the Prophet Noah with whom the foundations of human civilised society were laid. See also 7 : 60-65 and 11 : 37-50.

77. "And We saved him and his family from the great distress;"³³²⁰

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٤﴾

78. And We made his offspring the only survivors.³³²¹

وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

79. And We left for him a good name among the later generations

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

80. Peace be upon Noah among the peoples!

سَلَامٌ عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

81. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

82. He was surely one of Our believing servants.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

83. Then We drowned the others.

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

84. And verily of his party was also Abraham;³³²²

وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْعَتِهِ لَاِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٥١﴾

^a21 : 77; 26 : 120; 54 : 14.

3320. Commentary :

The reference in the words "great distress" is to "Noah's Flood."

3321. Commentary :

As stated in v. 76 above, Noah laid the foundations of human civilization and culture and it is an established fact of history that with the progress of a people in civilization their numbers tend to increase and a corresponding decrease takes place in the numbers of less civilised communities living with them in the same or surrounding lands. The descendants of Noah being more civilised and having more material resources at their disposal seemed to have spread to other lands and subjugated less civilized peoples, who in course of time became absorbed in them and consequently became extinct.

3322. Important Words :

شَيْعَة (party) is derived from شَاع. They say شاع i.e. he followed him and helped him or was his companion. شَيْعَهُ (shayya'-hī) means, he went out with him to see him off or to accompany him to his abode. شَيْعَة means, a separate or distinct party or sect of men; any people that have combined in or for an affair. شَيْعَة الرجل means, a man's followers and his helpers. شَيْع (plural) is applied to any people or party whose affair or case is one, who follow one another's opinion. أَشْيَاع (which is plu-plu.) means, the likes (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse may mean that Abraham was a follower of the Law of Noah or that he belonged

85. "When he came to his Lord with a pure heart."³³²³

إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ۝٨٥

86. ^bWhen he said to his father and to his people, 'What is it that you worship?'³³²⁴

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝٨٦

87. 'A lie—gods beside Allah do you desire?'³³²⁵

أَيْفَكَ الْهَيَّةَ دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ ۝٨٧

88. 'So what is your idea about the Lord of the worlds?'³³²⁶

فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝٨٨

89. Then he cast a glance at the stars,³³²⁷

فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ ۝٨٩

^a26 : 90.

^b19 : 43; 26 : 71.

^c6 : 77.

to the same category, *i.e.* the category of Divine Messengers, to which Noah belonged.

3323. Important Words :

سَلِيم (sound) is derived from سَلِمَ which means, he was safe and secure. سَلِمَ مِنْ عَيْبٍ أَوْ آفَةٍ means, he was or became free from defect or safe or secure from calamity. أَسْلَمَ لِلَّهِ means, he submitted or resigned to God. سَلِمَ therefore means, sound, healthy, safe and free from all defects and impurities; resigned to God's will (Aqrab). See also 2 : 113,209; 4 : 95 & 10 : 26.

Commentary :

قَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ means, a sound and healthy heart; a heart free from all dross and spiritual maladies; a heart at peace with God and man; a heart fully resigned to the will of the great Creator. Such a noble heart did Abraham really possess.

3324. Commentary :

For Abraham's account and his oration against idolatry, see also 21 : 52-68.

3325. Commentary :

Man is prone to worship false gods in the form

of human beings to whom he attributes Divine powers, such as Jesus, Rama, etc; or objects of nature such as the sun, the moon and the stars; or inanimate things such as gods hewed out of wood and stone, or his own time-worn customs, usages, prejudices and superstitions, his desires, passions, etc.

3326. Commentary :

In these words Abraham rebukes his people for having such a poor conception of God, the Lord of all the worlds as to prefer worship of false gods to His worship.

3327. Commentary :

The verse seems to suggest that the controversy between Abraham and his people about Divine attributes dragged on late into the night, and seeing that the talk served no useful purpose Abraham wanted to cut it short. So he cast a glance at the stars suggesting thereby that the talk had dragged on long and far into the night and it should better be stopped.

90. And said, 'I am indeed *feeling* unwell.'³³²⁸

91. So they went away from him turning their backs.

92. Then he went secretly to their gods and *addressing them* said, 'Will you not eat ?'³³²⁹

93. 'What is the matter with you that you speak not ?'³³³⁰

نَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ ⑩

فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ ⑪

فَرَاغَ إِلَى إِلِهِتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ⑫

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ⑬

3328. Commentary :

The verse may also suggest that Abraham was feeling unwell and in view of the useless nature of the talk that his people were having with him he wanted to avoid it. He therefore told them that they had better leave him alone as he was not feeling well.

The words *انى سقيم* may also mean : "I am sick of your worshipping false gods," or "I am sorely distressed at heart because you worship false gods," or "I hate your worship of false gods."

3329. Important Words :

راغ (went secretly) means, he turned aside or away or he went this way or that quickly and guilefully; he turned aside to deceive him who was behind him. *راغ الى فلان* means, he went to such a one secretly. *راغ عليه* means, he advanced towards him; he turned against him secretly (Aqrab & Lane).

3330. Commentary :

At different places the Qur'ān has pointed to one of the most distinctive attributes of a living God, viz., that He speaks to His chosen servants and listens to and answers their prayers. It is a dead and defunct deity, fit to be thrown away, that has not the power to speak or listen to and accept the prayers of his votaries.

God has revealed Himself throughout the ages to His Elect through His actions and spoken word. Even now He has not ceased to reveal Himself and will never cease to do so. While rebuking the Israelites for taking the calf as their deity the Qur'ān exposes the absurdity of their position in the words: "Did they not see that it spoke not to them nor guided them" (7:149). Again in 20 : 90 Moses is described as bringing home to the Israelites their folly for adopting the calf as their god in the words: *Could they not see this simple fact that it returned to them no answer, and had not the power to do them either harm or good.* In vv. 21 : 64 & 66 and in the verse under comment Abraham advances the same argument in repudiation of idol-worship, viz., that the false gods cannot speak. From all these verses it becomes clear that God ceases to be a living God and forfeits all right to our worship and adoration if He ceases to speak to us and does not listen to and accept our prayers. Those who think that God has now given up revealing Himself to His servants are guilty of a colossal mistake. Islam's greatest superiority over all other religions lies in the fact that it has produced in every age men to whom God has spoken. In our own time He spoke to Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah.

94. "Then he began suddenly to strike them with the right hand."³³³¹

95. Thereupon *the people* came towards him, hastening.³³³²

96. He said, ^b"Do you worship that which you have *yourselves* carved out,

97. 'Whereas Allah has created you and *also* your handiwork?'³³³³

98. They said, 'Build for him a structure and 'cast him into the fire.'

99. "Thus they intended an evil design against him, but We made them most humiliated."³³³⁴

100. 'And he said, 'I am going to my Lord. He will surely guide me.'

101. *And he prayed*, 'My Lord, grant me a righteous son.'

فَرَأَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ ٩٢

فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ ٩٣

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ ٩٤

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ٩٥

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ٩٦

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ٩٧

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ٩٨

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ٩٩

^a21 : 59.

^b21 : 67-68.

^c21 : 69; 29 : 25.

^d21 : 71.

^e19 : 50; 29 : 27.

3331. Commentary :

The right hand being the symbol of power and strength, the verse signifies that Abraham struck the idols with his full power and broke them into pieces. The word يمين also meaning a vow, the verse may signify that Abraham struck the idols with great force in fulfilment of his vow referred to in "*And by Allah I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs*" (21 : 58).

3332. Important Words :

يزفون (came hastening) is derived from زف They say زف القوم فى مشيتهم i.e. the people. hastened or were quick in going alone. زف الريح means, the wind blew violently. زف الطائر means,

the bird spread its wings and threw itself (Aqrab).

3333. Commentary :

The verse may have one or all the three following interpretations: (1) God has created you and your handiwork, i.e. the idols of stone which you carve out with your own hands. (2) God is your Creator and the Creator of all that you do, i.e. He has created the means and the instruments by which you do your works. (3) God is your Creator but how foolish you are to worship what you make with your own hands.

3334. Commentary :

As the enemies of Abraham were frustrated in their plans against him, they had a deep feeling of humiliation.

102. So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing son.³³³⁵

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. And when he was old enough to work with him, he said, 'O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering thee. So consider, what thou thinkest of it!' He replied, 'O my father, do as thou art commanded; thou wilt find me, if Allah please, steadfast in my faith.'³³³⁶

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَئِي إِنِّي آرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ قَالَ يَٰأَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. And when they both submitted to the will of God, and he had thrown him down on his forehead,³³³⁷

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴿١٠٤﴾

3335. Commentary :

Elsewhere (15 : 54) the Qur'ān describes Ishmael as غلامٍ حَلِيمٍ i.e. a son endowed with knowledge. It seems that Ishmael was both very forbearing and intelligent and was also possessed of great knowledge.

3336. Commentary :

See next verse.

3337. Commentary :

The Qur'ān and the Bible disagree as to which of his two sons—Ishmael and Isaac—Abraham, in pursuance of God's command, offered for sacrifice. The Qur'ān says that it was Ishmael, but according to the Bible, it was Isaac. The Bible, speaking of the sacrifice says 'And He said, 'Take now thy son, *thine only son*, whom thou lovest, even Isaac and get there into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of' (Gen. 22 : 2). The Qur'ān, on the other hand, declares clearly and unequivocally, in the verse under comment, that it was Ishmael who was offered

for sacrifice. The Bible, however, contradicts itself in this respect. According to it, Abraham was commanded to offer his only son for sacrifice, but Isaac was at no time his only son. Ishmael was born to Abraham when he was 86 years old while Isaac was born to him when he had reached the very advanced age of 99. Thus for 13 years Ishmael was Abraham's only son, and, being also his first born, was doubly dear to him. It stands to reason, therefore, that Abraham must have been required by God to offer for sacrifice his nearest and dearest thing which was his only and first born son who was Ishmael.

Some evangelists have vainly tried to show that, "Ishmael being of the handmaid, was born after the flesh while Isaac being born of the free woman was by promise" (Galatians, 4 : 22,23). Apart from the fact that Hagar, Ishmael's mother, belonged to the royal family of Egypt and was no handmaid, Ishmael has repeatedly been mentioned in the Bible as Abraham's son, exactly as Isaac has been mentioned as his son (Gen. 16 : 16; 17 : 23, 25). Moreover,

105. And we called to him: 'O Abraham.

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا أَبْرَاهِيمَ

106. 'Thou hast indeed fulfilled the dream.' Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.³³³⁸

قَدْ صَدَقْتَ الرُّعْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْحَسَنِينَ

analogous promises were made to Abraham in regard to the future greatness of Ishmael as were made to him about Isaac. The Bible says: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17 : 20). "And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar) 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude.'" (Gen. 16 : 10.-11). So apart from the substitution in the Bible of Isaac for Ishmael which seems to be deliberate, and of Moriah for Marwah, an hillock which lies in the vicinity of Mecca near which Abraham, in fulfilment of his vision, referred to in the preceding verse, left Ishmael with his mother Hagar while yet a child, there is nothing in the Bible to lend the slightest support to the view that Abraham offered Isaac for sacrifice and not Ishmael.

Furthermore, the fact that whereas no trace is to be found in the religious ceremonies of Jews and Christians of the supposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, the Muslims, spiritual descendants of Ishmael, commemorate with great fervour his intended sacrifice, by slaughtering every year rams and goats all

over the world on the tenth day of Dhu'l-Hijjah. This universal sacrifice of rams and goats by Muslims on a specific day in commemoration of Abraham's preparedness to slaughter Ishmael, establishes beyond dispute or doubt that it was Ishmael whom Abraham offered for sacrifice and not Isaac. In a sense Abraham had already fulfilled his vision by leaving Ishmael while yet a child with his mother. Hagar, in the bleak and barren valley of Mecca where at that time there was to be found no sign of life, nor even a blade of grass or a drop of water. That brave act, in fact, had symbolised the sacrifice of Ishmael.

3338. Commentary :

The words "Thou hast indeed fulfilled the dream" show that Abraham was not required to fulfil his vision in actual fact but that it was only a practical demonstration of his intention and preparedness to slaughter his son which was desired of him. The vision, as stated above, had already symbolically been fulfilled in Hagar and Ishmael having been left by Abraham in the valley of Mecca which was at that time an arid and barren waste. The leaving behind of a weak and helpless woman with a child, in a place completely devoid of all signs of life and even of water or any other means of subsistence, did indeed constitute a great sacrifice on the part of the noble Patriarch.

107. That surely was a manifest trial.³³³⁹

108. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.³³⁴⁰

109. And We left for him *a good name* among the succeeding generations—³³⁴¹

110. Peace be upon Abraham!

111. Thus do We reward those who do good.

112. Surely, he was *one* of Our believing servants.

113. ^aAnd We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a Prophet, *and one* of the righteous.

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ ①٠٧

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ ①٠٨

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ①٠٩

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ①١٠

كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْحَسَنِينَ ①١١

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ①١٢

وَبَشَرْنَاهُ إِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ①١٣

^a11 : 72; 19 : 50; 21 : 73; 29 : 28.

3339. Commentary :

It was indeed a supreme trial for Abraham to have left his dear wife and his only son, unprotected and unprotected, in a place where, humanly speaking, they were sure to perish.

3340. Commentary :

Abraham's preparedness to sacrifice Ishmael was perpetuated in the Islamic institution of "Sacrifice" which forms an integral part of the ceremonies of Hajj. As long as Islam lasts—and it shall last till the end of time—Pilgrimage to Mecca will continue to be performed and on the tenth day of Dhu'l Hijjah goats and rams will continue to be slaughtered in hundreds of thousands in Mecca and all over the Muslim world

in commemoration of Ishmael's sacrifice. It is this institution of "Sacrifice" that seems to have been referred to in this verse in the words : "And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice."

The reference in the verse may also be to the abolition of human sacrifice which seemed to be in vogue in Abraham's time and to the substitution for it of animal sacrifice.

3341. Commentary :

What greater testimony could there be to Abraham having left behind him a good name than that the followers of the three great religions—Islam, Christianity and Judaism—take pride in ascribing their ancestry to the great Patriarch.

114. And We bestowed blessings on him and Isaac. ^aAnd among their progeny are *some* who do good and others who clearly wrong themselves.³³⁴²

وَبَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا
مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

R. 4 115. ^bAnd, indeed, We bestowed favours on Moses and Aaron.³³⁴³

وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾

116. ^cAnd We saved them both and their people from the great distress;³³⁴⁴

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾

117. And We helped them, and it was they who were victorious.

وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَكَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. And We gave them the Book that made *things* clear ;

وَاتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119. And We guided them to the right path.

وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١١٩﴾

120. And We left for them *a good name* among the succeeding generations —³³⁴⁵

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121. Peace be on Moses and Aaron !

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

^a57 : 27. ^b20 : 31-37; 26 : 16-17; 28 : 35. ^c20 : 81; 26 : 66.

3342. Commentary :

The words "We bestowed blessings on him," refer to the blessings that God bestowed upon Abraham's progeny through Ishmael as Isaac has been mentioned separately by name.

3343. Commentary :

The greatest Prophet after Abraham, among his descendants through Isaac, was Moses, counterpart of the Holy Prophet who was a descendant of Ishmael.

3344. Commentary :

The reference to "great distress" may be found elsewhere in the Qur'ān (2:50) in the words: *And remember the time when we delivered you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women and in that there was a great trial for you from your Lord.*

3345. Commentary :

Moses and Aaron are remembered with great respect and affection by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

122. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

123. Surely, they were both among Our believing servants.

124. And assuredly Elias *also* was one of the Messengers,³³⁴⁶

125. When he said to his people, 'Will you not be God-fearing?

126. 'Do you call on Ba'l, and forsake the Best of creators,³³⁴⁷

127. 'Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers of old?'

128. But they treated him as a liar, and they will surely be brought *before God to render an account of their deeds*;

129. Except the chosen servants of Allah.

130. And We left for him *a good name* among the succeeding generations—

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٣٦﴾

إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٣٧﴾

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٣٨﴾

إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٣٩﴾

أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿٣٤٠﴾

اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٤١﴾

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٤٢﴾

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٣٤٣﴾

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٣٤٤﴾

3346. Commentary :

Elias or Elijah lived about 900 B.C. He was a native of Gilead, a place on the eastern bank of the Jordan. According to the Bible he was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind in a chariot of fire and after him his mantle was taken by Elisha (Jew. Enc. & 1 Kings, 17 : 1).

3347. Important Words :

بَعْلٌ is derived from بَعَلَ (ba'ala) which means, he married or he took a wife; or he became a

husband. بَعَلَ means, husband; wife (زوج like بعل) means both a husband and a wife, more generally a husband); lord, master or owner of a thing; a chief; a family whose maintenance is incumbent upon a person (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

Ba'l was the name of an idol belonging to the people of the Prophet Ilyās. These people worshipped the sun. Ba'l may also stand for the sun-god which belonged to the people of a town in Syria now called Bal-Bekk (Lane).

131. Peace be on Elias *and his people!*³³⁴⁸

سَلَّمَ عَلَىٰ إِيَّاسَ ۖ

132. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

133. Surely, he was *one* of Our believing servants.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

134. ^aAnd assuredly Lot, *too*, was *one* of the Messengers,³³⁴⁹

وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لِّسَنَ الرُّسُلِينَ

135. ^bWhen We delivered him and all his family,

إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ

136. ^cExcept an old woman *who* was among those who stayed behind.

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ

137. ^dThen We utterly destroyed the others.³³⁵⁰

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

138. ^eAnd surely you pass by them in the morning.³³⁵¹

وَأَنْتُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُصْبِحِينَ

139. And by night. Then why do you not understand?³³⁵²

وَبِالْلَّيْلِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

^a7 : 81; 26 : 161; 29 : 29. ^b26 : 171; 29 : 33; 51 : 36. ^c7 : 84; 11 : 82; 15 : 61; 27 : 58.

^d26 : 173. ^e15 : 77.

3348. Commentary :

إِيَّاسَ (Ilyās) may be another form of إِيَّاس (Ilyās) as سَيْنَاء (95 : 3) is that of سَيْنَاء (23 : 21); or being plural of إِيَّاس it may mean Ilyās and his people.

3349. Commentary :

For Lot see 15 : 62-78.

3350. Important Words :

دَمَّرْنَا (We utterly destroyed) is the intensive form of دَمَر (damara). They say دَمَرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ i.e. he intruded upon them; he came upon them without permission. دَمَرُوا او دَمَرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ (dammara)

means, He (God) utterly destroyed them or annihilated them (Aqrab).

Commentary :

Both the towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, to which Lot preached his Message were completely destroyed; only the members of Lot's family, except his wife, were saved.

3351. Commentary :

See next verse.

3352. Commentary :

Sodom and Gomorrah were situated on the highway from Arabia to Syria where the Arab

5 140. "And surely Jonah *also* was one of the Messengers,³³⁵³

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

141. When he fled to the laden ship;³³⁵⁴

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١٤١﴾

142. And he cast lots *with the crew of the ship* and was of the losers.³³⁵⁵

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

^a 21 : 88; 68 : 49.

caravans passed by day and night. At another place in the Qur'ān these towns are mentioned as having been situated "on a road that still exists" (15 : 77).

The present and the preceding verses are full of extreme pathos. The Quraishites of Mecca are told that a great Prophet has come to them. They have rejected him. They know that there had lived in the neighbouring land another Prophet, Lot. His people also rejected him and God utterly destroyed them for their wicked and abominable deeds. The site of their annihilated towns lies on the highway which leads to Syria to which country their (of the Quraishites) caravans frequently pass. Then why do they not take a lesson from the fate that met the people of Lot, and accept their own Prophet—the Holy Prophet Muḥammad?

3353. **Commentary :**

Jonah, the Prophet, has been mentioned at six places in the Qur'ān. In 4 : 164 and 6 : 87-88 he has been reckoned among the Prophets of God. In the present verse he has been spoken of as a Divine Messenger and in 21 : 88 and 68 : 49, he has been given the descriptive epithets of *صاحب الحوت* (Master of the Fish) and *ذو النون* (Fellow of the Fish). He was an Israelite

Prophet and lived in the 9th century in the reign of Jeroboam II or Jehoahaz. See also 6 : 88.

3354. **Commentary :**

According to the Bible Jonah was commissioned by God to go to Nineveh and 'cry against' it, but, instead, he fled to Tarshish "from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1 : 3). The Qur'ān contradicts this Biblical statement as it impugns a Divine Prophet, and, according to the Qur'ān, Divine Prophets are sinless and incapable of disobeying God's command. It is, therefore, not possible that Jonah should have even conceived of fleeing from the presence of the Omnipresent God. In fact, Jonah, being angry with his people, because they had rejected the Divine Message, fled from them, and not from God. See also 21 : 88. The whole account of Jonah as given in the Qur'ān may be a description of his Spiritual Ascension and may be taken in a figurative sense and interpreted accordingly.

3355. **Important Words :**

سَاهَمَ (cast lots) is derived from *سَهَمَ*. They say *سَاهَمَهُ* i.e. he overcame him in the game of shooting arrows. *سَاهَمَهُ* means, he shot arrows with him in competition; he cast or drew lots with him. *سَاهَمْتُهُ* means, I competed with him

143. And the fish swallowed him while he was blaming *himself*.

144. And had he not been of those who glorify *God*,

145. He would surely have tarried in its belly till the Day of Resurrection.

146. Then We cast him on a bare tract of land, and he was sick;³³⁵⁶

147. And We caused a gourd plant to grow over him.

148. And We sent him *as a Messenger* to a hundred thousand people or more,

149. ^aAnd they believed; so We gave them provision for a while.³³⁵⁷

150. ^bNow ask *the disbelievers* whether thy Lord has daughters, whereas they have sons.³³⁵⁸

فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْوَحْتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ ﴿١٤٦﴾

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

فَأَمَنُوا فَتَنَعْنَاهُمُ إِلَى حِينٍ ﴿١٤٩﴾

فَأَسْتَفْتِهِمُ الرَّبُّ أَلِذَاكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

^a10 : 99.

^b6 : 101; 16 : 58; 43 : 17; 52 : 40; 53 : 22.

in casting lots or in shooting arrows and overcame him therein (Aqrab & Lane).

3356. Important Words :

عرى (bare tract of land) is derived from عرى which means, he was or became naked, bare or without clothing. They say عرى من العيب *i.e.* he was or became free from fault, defect or blemish. عراء means, a wide or spacious place or tract of land in which nothing is hidden; or the vacant surface of the earth or land or of a wide space of land (Lane).

3357. Commentary :

In the whole history of religion no people are known to have benefited so much by the warning of impending Divine punishment as did

the people of Jonah. When they were warned that they would be visited with punishment if they did not behave and believe in Jonah and did not mend their ways, they at once repented and believed in Jonah with the result that the threatened punishment was averted. This repentance of Jonah's people, even though belated, so pleased God that they were not only forgiven but their case is held up in the Qur'ān, as an example for disbelievers of all Prophets of God (10 : 99).

3358. Commentary :

After giving a brief history of some of the Prophets in the preceding verses, the *Sūra* proceeds in the present verse to deal with a basic

151. ^aDid We create the angels females while they were witnesses?

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

152. Now, surely it is *one* of their fabrications that they say,

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ إَفْكِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. 'Allah has begotten *children*;' and they are certainly liars.

وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

154. ^bHas He chosen daughters in preference to sons?³³⁵⁹

أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

155. What is the matter with you? How judge ye?

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

156. Will you not reflect?^{3359A}

أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

157. 'Or have you a clear authority?

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥٧﴾

^a17 : 41; 37 : 151; 43 : 20; 52 : 40. ^b43 : 17; 53 : 22. ^c52 : 39.

principle of all religions—the repudiation and condemnation of idolatry. Among different peoples *Shirk* (ascribing Divine powers and attributes to beings and things other than God) has taken different forms. Some people worship forces of nature, others idols of stone, and yet others ascribe Divine powers to angels, believing them to be God's daughters. It is this form of idolatry which was prevalent among the Arabs and in the Holy Prophet's time and which has been condemned here.

3359. Commentary :

The verse means to say that all *Shirk* (idolatry),

in whatever form it may be practised, is reprehensible, but to believe that God has preferred daughters to sons (a thing which disbelievers would not like for themselves), is nothing but foolish and condemnable.

3359A. Commentary :

The verse seems to administer a rebuke to disbelievers in the words, "Cannot you understand this simple fact that the ascription of Divine powers and attributes to weak human beings, to the forces of nature, to inanimate things or even to angels who themselves have been created by God, offends against reason and is an insult to human intelligence?"

158. Then produce your Book, if you are truthful.³³⁶⁰

159. "And they assert a blood relationship between Him and the Jinn, while the Jinn *themselves* know that they will be brought *before God* for judgment."³³⁶¹

160. Holy is Allah *and* free from what they attribute *to Him*.

161. But the chosen servants of Allah *attribute nothing derogatory to Him*.

162. Verily, you and what you worship —

163. None of you can mislead *anyone* against Him.³³⁶²

164. Except *only* him who shall burn in Hell.

165. Say : 'There is not one of us but has an appointed station.'³³⁶³

فَاتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ نَسَبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ

الْجَنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَحُضَرُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

سُبْحَنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَتَنِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

إِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦٤﴾

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

46 : 101.

3360. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that apart from human reason and intelligence which repudiate all forms of *Shirk* (idolatry), no Divine Book accords the slightest countenance to this most foolish and obnoxious doctrine; on the contrary all of them refute and contradict it in strong and scathing terms.

3361. Commentary :

The verse means to say that morally and intellectually disbelievers have become so degraded that they assert blood-relationship between God and evil spirits. What greater folly and blasphemy could there possibly be?

3362. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that it is only people of the evil spirits' own ilk that such spirits can mislead. They have no control or influence over godly men. "Surely thou shalt have no power over My servants," says the Qur'an (15 : 41). The pronoun *•* in *عليه* (against Him) refers to God.

3363. Commentary :

The words of this and the next two verses may also be taken to have been spoken by righteous men of God, or the reference may specially be to the righteous men mentioned in the beginning of the *Sūra* or, as some say, to the angels.

166. 'And, verily, we are those who stand ranged in rows.

167. "And we are verily those who glorify *God*.'

168. And surely *the disbelievers* used to say,

169. 'If we had with us a Reminder *like that* of the people of old,

170. 'We would surely have been Allah's chosen servants.'

171. Yet *when it has come to them* they disbelieve therein, but they will soon come to know.³³⁶⁴

172. And surely Our word has gone forth respecting Our servants, the Messengers,³³⁶⁵

173. ^bThat it is certainly they who will be helped;^{3365A}

174. And that it is Our host that will certainly be victorious.

وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصّٰفُّوْنَ ۝۱۶۶

وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُوْنَ ۝۱۶۷

وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَيَقُولُنَّ ۝۱۶۸

لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝۱۶۹

كُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْخٰلَصِينَ ۝۱۷۰

فَكْفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَْعْلَمُوْنَ ۝۱۷۱

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝۱۷۲

إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ ۝۱۷۳

وَإِنْ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ۝۱۷۴

^a2 : 31; 21 : 21; 41 : 39 . ^b40 : 52; 58 : 22.

3364. Commentary :

The verse implies a warning to disbelievers that they will soon see the evil consequences of their rejection of truth.

3365. Commentary :

See next verse.

3365A. Commentary :

In verse 171 above the disbelievers were threatened with punishment if they did not accept the

Prophet of God. In the verse under comment they are told that the cause of truth must and does always prevail, as it is an immutable Divine law that God's Messengers never fail in their missions. The history of all religions bears an eloquent testimony to this undeniable fact. Elsewhere the Qur'an says: "Most surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe, in the present life and on the day when witnesses will stand forth" (40 : 52).

175. So turn thou away from them for a while.³³⁶⁶

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ۖ ﴿١٤٦﴾

176. And watch them, for they will soon see *their own end*.³³⁶⁷

وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصَرُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

177. "Is it then Our punishment that they seek to hasten on?"

أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

178. But when it descends into their courtyard, it shall be an evil morning for those who were warned.³³⁶⁸

فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

179. So turn thou away from them for a while.³³⁶⁹

وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ۖ ﴿١٥٠﴾

180 And watch, for they will soon see.

وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصَرُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

^a22 : 48; 27 : 72; 29 : 54.

3366. Commentary :

When the truth of a Prophet of God becomes established beyond all doubt and disbelievers are left with no plea or pretext to reject his Message and yet persist in rejecting it, the Prophet is told to leave them alone to be judged by God and treated by Him as He, in His infallible wisdom, may think fit.

3367. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet is here told to wait till Divine decree decides the fate of disbelievers.

3368. Important Words :

سَاحَة (courtyard) means, the court or open area of a house; a part of a house in which there is no building or roof; a wide place among the

dwellings of a tribe. The Arabs say *عمر الله ساحتك* i.e. may God make the courtyard of thy house inhabited with people (Lane).

Commentary :

The reference in the verse seems to be to the Fall of Mecca when a Muslim army of ten thousand strong entered its suburbs. That was indeed an evil day for the Meccans. The cup of their mortification and humiliation had become full to the brim, as all their evil designs against Islam had completely failed and it had won a glorious victory over disbelief.

3369. Commentary :

The repetition of this and the next verse signifies that Divine punishment is almost at the doors of the disbelievers.

181. Holy is thy Lord, the Lord of Honour *and Power*, far above that which they assert.³³⁷⁰

سُبْحَنَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

182. ^aAnd peace be upon the Messengers!³³⁷¹

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

183. ^bAnd all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

وَإِلَهُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

^a27 : 60.

^b1: 2; 6 : 46.

3370. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that with the defeat and discomfiture of disbelief the fact has become clearly established that the Great God Who has sent the Holy Prophet is the God of Honour

and Power and that His name will now be glorified in the whole of Arabia.

3371. **Commentary :**

The reference in the verse is to the Holy Prophet who represents all the Prophets and Messengers of God.

CHAPTER 38

Ş Ā D

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date and Place of Revelation

Like its predecessors this *Sūra* is also admittedly of Meccan origin. It was revealed in the early years of the Holy Prophet's life at Mecca. Ibn 'Abbās, as reported by Baihaqī and Ibn Merdawaih, also subscribes to this view, and other scholars, too, agree with him. From its contents and subject-matter the *Sūra* bears a very close resemblance to Al-Şāffāt. It takes its title from its opening word Şād, *i.e.* the Truthful God.

Connection with Al-Şāffāt

The preceding *Sūra* ended with the challenging Divine declaration that "God's hosts shall be victorious and it shall be an evil day for the disbelievers when Divine punishment shall descend into their courtyard." The present *Sūra* opens with an equally emphatic declaration that it is an unalterable decree of the Truthful God and it shall happen without fail that the believers shall attain wealth, power and eminence by acting upon the teachings of the Qur'ān, while disbelievers shall meet with disgrace and destruction like those who disobeyed and defied Divine Prophets in the past.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

As stated above the *Sūra* opens with a firm declaration—in fact, God swears by the Qur'ān—that by acting upon its teaching and by making it a rule of their lives the believers will achieve glory and eminence and will come to occupy a most honoured place in the comity of mighty nations; and disbelievers will suffer humiliation and disgrace because they "are steeped in false pride and enmity." Disbelievers are further warned to take a lesson from the histories of past generations of disbelievers who, because of their rejection of the Divine Message, met with a very sad fate. The *Sūra* proceeds to say that the Meccan disbelievers repeat the parrot-cry that they will not give up the worship of their gods at the behest of a man who is just one of them. In reply to this foolish plea they are asked: Since when have they begun to arrogate to themselves the possession of the treasures of God's grace and mercy? It is God's own prerogative that He chooses whom He deems fit for the conveyance of His will to His creatures; and now He has chosen the Holy Prophet Muḥammad for this purpose. If they will not believe in him their combined forces will be routed and they will be destroyed like the opponents of past Messengers; and Islam will triumph and grow from strength to strength.

After making a brief reference to the central theme of the Unity of God in its opening verses, and by way of introduction making an emphatic prediction that the forces of evil will suffer defeat and

disgrace and the votaries of the One God will be given power, wealth and distinction, the *Sūra* gives a somewhat detailed description of the great glory and prosperity which the Israelite nation had attained in the reigns of two of their Prophet-Kings—David and Solomon. It also refers to the plots that had been hatched in David's glorious reign to undermine his power and influence and to the seeds of decay and disintegration that had become sown during Solomon's reign when the Israelites rolled in wealth and were at the peak of material prosperity. The Holy Prophet, by implication, is told that, consumed with jealousy at his growing power, his enemies will also hatch plots to take his life, and so he should always be on his guard against them. Similarly, reference to Israelite prosperity in the reigns of David and Solomon implies a prophecy that the enemies of Islam, by plotting to kill the Holy Prophet, will seek to nip the tender plant of Islam in the bud, but they will fail in their wicked designs and Islam will continue to gain power and strength till it will attain the heights of grandeur and prosperity. But if Muslims did not take proper care, they would find, to their cost, that in the very hey-day of their glory, forces were at work seeking to undermine the solidarity and stability of Islam. After this a brief mention is made of Prophet Job who had to suffer great hardships, but the temporary phase of his tribulation quickly passed and he came into his own and his loss was doubly made up. The reference to Job is followed by a fleeting allusion to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Prophets Ishmael, Elisha and Dhu'l Kifl. All these were honoured servants of God, says the *Sūra*, whom He chose for the bestowal of His grace because they worked in the ways of righteousness and preached and propagated piety in the world.

Next, we are told that those good people who copy the example of the noble Prophets of God and follow in their footsteps will receive God's favours which know no decrease or diminution. But those who oppose truth and adopt evil ways will burn in the fire of Hell.

After referring to some of the Prophets who suffered great hardships at the hands of their enemies and after dealing with the subject that opposition to God's Messengers never goes unpunished or their acceptance unrewarded, the *Sūra* reverts to its main subject, namely, Divine Unity. It closes on the note that whenever men stray away from the path of rectitude, and begin to worship false gods, a Divine Messenger is raised among them to bring them back to the worship of the One True God, and all the angel-like men are bidden to believe in him and help him in the furtherance of his cause. The sons of darkness seek to put all sorts of obstacles and impediments in the Prophet's way, and deceive and beguile men away from God. But truth overcomes all hindrances, and triumphs and prevails in the long run.

سُورَةُ صَ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٣٨)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³³⁷²

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. Sād. ^bBy the Qur'an, full of exhortation, it is *Our revealed Word*.³³⁷³

ص وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ ②

3. But those who disbelieve are steeped in false pride and enmity.³³⁷⁴

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ ③

4. "How many a generation have We destroyed before them ! They cried out *for help*, but it was no longer the time for escape."³³⁷⁵

كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَُوا زُلَّاتٍ
حِينَ مَنَاصٍ ④

^aSee 1 : 1.

^b43 : 45.

^c6 : 7; 19 : 75; 36 : 32; 50 : 37.

3372. Commentary :

See 1 : 1

3373. Commentary :

The letter ص may signify "the Truthful God" or "I am Allah, the Truthful" or "God has spoken the truth" (صدق الله). For an explanation of abbreviated letters see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2.

ذِي الذِّكْرِ means full of admonition and exhortation or possessing eminence and honour; or acting upon its teaching the believers will achieve honour, good name and eminence.

The whole verse may mean that the Truthful God swears by the Qur'an that the followers of the Holy Prophet, by acting upon the teaching of the Qur'an and making it a rule of their lives, will achieve eminence and will come to occupy a most honoured place in the comity of nations. The verse thus constitutes a great prophecy about the glorious future of Islam.

3374. Commentary :

The root-cause of all sin and disbelief is false pride, conceit and arrogance. The first recorded

sin was committed by Satan who refused to submit to Adam on the basis of his farcical superiority to him (Adam). انا خير منه i.e. "I am better than he" (17 : 13) has always been the boast of disbelievers which has prevented them from accepting the truth in the time of every Prophet. They cannot persuade themselves to give their allegiance to one who, they say, is quite like themselves; even inferior to them in some respects.

3375. Important Words :

لَاتَهُ عَنْ كَرًا (it was no longer). لَاتَهُ means, he withheld him or restrained him and turned him from such a course. لَاتَ شَيْئًا means, he concealed a thing that he knew, and told or narrated something different from it. لَاتَهُ حَقَّهُ means, he diminished unto him his due or right. According to some scholars لَاتَ is originally لَيْسَ, its س being changed into ت and ي into الف; others are of the opinion that it is made up of two words, the fem. ت is added to the negative لَا to make the word feminine or to render the negation more

5. "And they wonder that a Warner has come to them from among themselves; and the disbelievers say, 'This is a magician, a great liar.'³³⁷⁶

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكُفَرُونَ
هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ۝

6. 'Has he made *all* the gods into one God? This is indeed a strange thing.'

أَجَعَلَ الْإِلَهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ
عَجَابٌ ۝

7. And the leaders among them went about *saying* 'Go and ^bstick to your gods. This is a thing designed.'³³⁷⁷

وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى
إِلَهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ ۝

a7 : 64.

b71 : 24.

intensive. According to a third school it is an independent word, neither originally ليس nor لا. The fourth school, however, thinks that it is a word and also a part of a word, namely the negative لا, and ت prefixed to حين. It is generally accompanied with حين or some word syn. with it and is used as لات الحين حين مناص i.e. the time was not the time of refuge. The expression لات حين مناص may have the following different meanings:

1. There was no place of flight existing for them.
2. The time is, and was, not a time of flight.
3. The time of fleeing or petitioning or being aided will not be available to them.

لات was also one of three great idols of the Meccans, the other two being عزي and مناة (Lane, Aqrab & Zamakhshari).

ناص (time for escape) is derived from ناص. They say ناص عن قرينه i.e. he fled from, kept away from or left, his associate. ناص فلانا means, he missed such a one and went ahead of him. They say ما لك من مناص i.e. there is no

time or place of refuge for thee (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers have rejected the message of truth with contempt and disdain, and consider it below their dignity to listen to the Holy Prophet, but when Divine punishment overtook them, they will cry for help but will find no refuge or asylum.

3376. Commentary :

The greatest obstacle in the way of disbelievers to accept the truth has always been that they would not give their allegiance to a man who is just one of them.

3377. Commentary :

As disbelievers believed that there were many gods, and the Holy Prophet proclaimed the Unity of God, they would say that somehow he had rolled all the gods into one.

The words "This is a thing designed" put in the mouths of the leaders of disbelief signify that according to them the Holy Prophet had his own ulterior motives to serve in preaching the message of the Unity of God. Or the words may mean that when invited by the Holy Prophet to give

8. "We have not heard of *anything like this in the latest religion*. This is nothing but a fabrication.³³⁷⁸

مَا سَبِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْإِلَهِ الْأَخِرَةِ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا
اِخْتِلَاقٌ ۝٨

9. "Has the exhortation been sent down to him *in preference to all of us*?" Nay, they are in doubt concerning My exhortation. Nay, they have not yet tasted My punishment.³³⁷⁹

ءَأُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ
مِّنْ ذِكْرِي بَلْ لَّتَأَيَّدُوا وَعَدَابٌ ۝٩

10. "Do they possess the treasures of the mercy of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Great Bestower?"³³⁸⁰

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ ۝١٠

11. Or is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them theirs? So let them ascend with the means *at their disposal*.³³⁸¹

أَمْ لَهُمْ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَذُكِّرُوا فِي الْأَسْبَابِ ۝١١

^a23 : 25. ^b54 : 26.

^c17 : 101; 52 : 38.

up idolatry, the leaders of the Quraish said to one another that they should stick to their own gods and that was a most desirable thing for them to do.

3378. Important Words :

اختلاق (fabrication) is derived from خلق which among other things means, he forged or fabricated a story or a lie, etc. (Lane). See also 3: 50 & 26 : 138.

Commentary :

The words "the latest religion" may refer to Christianity or the idolatrous Faith of the pagans of Mecca, or they may refer to all religions preceding Islam, because in no religion before Islam had belief in the Unity of God remained pure and unadulterated.

3379. Commentary :

The verse refers to a great obstacle which stands in the way of disbelievers to accept the truth. They simply cannot, they say, persuade

themselves to follow the lead of a man just like themselves—rather inferior to them in certain respects. The same subject has been referred to in 43 : 32 where the Meccan infidels are described as refusing to accept the Message of the Qur'ān on the pretext, "why has not this Qur'ān been sent to some great man of the two towns."

3380. Commentary :

In reply to the refusal of disbelievers to accept the Holy Prophet on the plea that he was a mere mortal like them and nothing more, the verse reproachfully asks them : Since when have they arrogated to themselves the possession of the treasures of Divine mercy? It is God's own special prerogative to select, in His infallible wisdom, whom He deems fit to be the bearer of His Message and the conveyer of His will to His creatures.

3381. Commentary

The present verse continues the argument embodied in the preceding verse and purports

12. *“They are a host from among the confederates which will be routed here.”*³³⁸²

13. *“Before them too the people of Noah, and the tribe of ‘Ād, and Pharaoh, the lord of stakes, rejected the Messengers as liars;”*³³⁸³

14. *And the tribe of Thamūd, and the people of Lot, and the Dwellers of the Wood—these were the confederates that rejected the Messengers.*³³⁸⁴

جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ ۝١٢

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ
ذُو الْأَوْتَادِ ۝١٣

وَتَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ أُولَئِكَ
الْأَحْزَابُ ۝١٤

454 : 46. b9 : 70; 40 : 32; 50 : 13. 15 : 79; 26 : 177; 50 : 15.

to say that disbelievers pose as if the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to them. Then let them gather, it says, all their means and resources against the Holy Prophet and multiply them as much as they can and use them against him. They will find to their mortification that they cannot arrest or impede the progress of the new Message.

3382. Important Words :

مَهْزُوم (routed) is derived from هَزَم. They say هَزَمَ الْعَدُوَّ i.e. he broke and defeated the enemy. هَزَمَ فَلَانًا means, he dug the well. هَزَمَ الْبِئْرَ means, he killed him. جُنْدٌ مَهْزُومٌ means, a defeated and broken army (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse at once contains a prophecy and a challenge. The challenge is to the forces of evil to muster all their resources and form themselves into a strong confederacy to stop the onward march of Islam. And the prophecy is to the effect that the combined forces of disbelief shall be put to an ignominious rout if they

dared oppose Islam. This mighty prophecy was literally fulfilled in the Battle of the Ditch.

3383. Important Words :

اوتاد (stakes) is the plural of وتد. They say وتد الوتد i.e. he made the peg firm or he drove it into the hole. اوتاد means, tent-pegs, poles, wooden nails; stakes etc. اوتاد الارض signifies, the mountains; اوتاد البلاد means, the chief men of the towns. and اوتاد الفم means, the teeth (Aqrab). ذو الاوتاد thus signifies, lord of large armies or stakes or of firmly established dominions.

3384. Commentary :

According to the Qur’ān, اصحاب الايكة (Dwellers of the Wood) and اصحاب مدين (People of Median) are names of the same people, or rather, of two sections of the same people, who had adopted two different kinds of trade, one living on commerce and the other keeping herds of camels and sheep and selling milk, wood, etc. Thus, اصحاب الايكة is a section of the tribe of the Prophet Shu’aib (26 : 177, 178), who has also been mentioned as having been sent to the People of Median (7 : 86, 11 : 85 & 29 : 37).

15. Not one of *them* but treated *their* Messengers as liars, "so My punishment rightly overtook *them*."³³⁸⁵

إِنْ كُلُّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ۝١٥

٢. 2 16. And these only wait for ^aa single blast, and there shall be no delaying it.³³⁸⁶

وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ۝١٦

17. They say, 'Our Lord, ^ahasten to us our portion of *the punishment* before the Day of Reckoning.'³³⁸⁷

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ۝١٧

^a15 : 80; 26 : 190; 50 : 15.

^b36 : 50.

^c2 : 201; 17 : 19.

3385. Commentary :

The Meccan disbelievers are here warned that people wealthier and much stronger than they had lived before them. They rejected and opposed their Prophets with the result that they were destroyed. If they (the Meccans) opposed the Holy Prophet they also will meet a similar fate.

3386. Important Words :

فَوَاقٍ (delaying) is derived from فاق. They say فاقَت الناقة *i.e.* the she-camel had in her udder the milk that had collected between two milkings. فَوَاقٍ means, the time between two milkings; the time between two suckings; the returning of the milk into the udder of the she-camel after the milking; the time between the opening of one's hand and the grasping with it the udder of the she-camel; or when the milker grasps the udder and then lets it go in milking. They say مَا أَقَامَ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا فَوَاقًا *i.e.* he did not stay with him but as long as between two milkings of a she-camel *i.e.* for a very short time (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that the whole attitude

of disbelievers shows that they will not accept the truth till Divine punishment overtook them. But when it came it will be swift and sudden and they will be granted no respite or delay.

3387. Important Words :

قِطَّنَا (our portion) is derived from قَط (qatta). They say قَطَّه *i.e.* he cut it. قَطَّ القلم means, he nibbed the reed for writing. قِط means, a slice cut off, a portion, share or lot, an hour or a portion of the night. قِطٌّ مِنْ اللَّيْلِ means, a portion of the night passed (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that when disbelievers are warned that if they did not accept the Holy Prophet they will be punished, they turn the warning into an occasion for mocking at the Prophet, and jeeringly say, "We demand to have the punishment here and now, and want no more respite." The use of the words "Day of Reckoning" implies that disbelievers will get the punishment when the reckoning of their evil deeds will have been made and they are shown to have fully deserved it.

18. Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the *man* of might ; surely he was always turning to God.³³⁸⁸

إِصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ
إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝١٨

19. "We subjected to him the mountains—they celebrated God's praises with him at nightfall and sunrise.³³⁸⁹

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعُشِيِّ وَ
الْإِشْرَاقِ ۝١٩

20. And *We subjected to him* the birds gathered together; all turned to him.³³⁹⁰

وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝٢٠

21. And We strengthened his kingdom, ^band gave him wisdom and decisive judgment,³³⁹¹

وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَّلَ
الْخِطَابِ ۝٢١

^a21 : 80; 34 : 11. ^b2 : 252.

3388. Commentary :

In this and the following several verses the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to bear patiently the jeers and sneers of disbelievers, like Prophets David, Solomon and Job who too had to face mockery and opposition from their enemies. These three Prophets possessed great power, influence and wealth and that is why perhaps they have always been mentioned together in the Qur'ān.

See also 4 : 164, 6 : 85 & 21 : 80-84.

3389. Commentary :

For a detailed explanation of this and the next verse see 21 : 80 & 34 : 11.

3390. Commentary :

While the reference in the word الجبال (the mountains) in the preceding verse is to the mountain tribes, in طير (birds) it may be to those tribes who hated to be held in subjection by

David and were impatient to get their liberty. The sense of impatience seems to be implied in the root-word طار (it flew). See also 21 : 80 & 34 : 11, 12.

3391. Important Words :

فصل الخطاب (decisive judgment) is infinitive noun from فصل (faṣala) which means, he separated or divided a thing or distinguished it, he made it clear or he explained it, he separated it. فصل الحكم means, he decided the judgment. فصل الخطاب means, distinct or plain speech such as decides or distinguishes between what is true and what is false, or that which the person to whom it is addressed clearly understands; or judicial sentence. يوم الفصل means, the Day of judgment or Decision (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The expression ذالأيدي meaning, possessor of dignity and power, the verse shows that David was one of the greatest and most powerful

22. And has the story of the disputants reached thee when they climbed over the wall of *his* chamber?³³⁹²

23. When they entered in upon David, and he was afraid of them. They said, "Fear not. *We* are two disputants; one of us has transgressed against the other; so judge between us with justice, and deviate not from the right course and guide us to the right way."³³⁹³

24. "This is my brother; he has ninety-nine ewes, and I have *only* one ewe. Yet he says, 'Give it to me,' and has been overbearing to me in his address."³³⁹⁴

وَهَلْ أَتَكَ نَبُؤُا الْخَصْمِ إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْحُرَابَ ۖ

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ

خَصْمَيْنِ بَغَى بَعْضُنَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَنَا

بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ ۝

إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَاعَى

نَعْجَةً وَاحِدَةً فَقَالَ أَكْفِلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي

فِي الْخِطَابِ ۝

Prophet-Kings of the House of Israel and was a very wise judge. In his reign Israelite glory had reached its high watermark. But in the time of his son, Solomon, though the Israelites tried to maintain their grandeur and the integrity and stability of their dominions, yet seeds of disruption and disintegration had been sown and signs of decadence had begun to appear. See also 34 : 11, 12.

3392. Important Words :

ساروا (they climbed over) is derived from سار. They say ساروا تسورا الجائط i.e. he scaled or climbed over the wall. سار اليه means, he leaped against and attacked him. سور المدينة (sawwara) means, he built a wall round the town (Aqrab & Lane).

3393. Commentary :

It appears from history that though Israelite power was at its height in the reigns of David and Solomon, yet mischief-mongers tried to stir

up discord and disaffection; and false charges were constantly raked up and spread against them and some evil-minded persons even sought to kill David. It is to one such attempt at David's life that reference has been made in the verse under comment. Two of his enemies scaled the wall of his private chamber with the intention of taking him unawares and killing him, but finding him on his guard and realizing that their plan had miscarried they tried to put him at ease and pretended as if they were merely two litigants who had come to seek his decision in a dispute. David, however, rightly understood their evil intention, and so naturally he was afraid of them.

3394. Commentary :

This verse refers to the story which the two intending murderers of David, finding him quite vigilant, seemed to have invented, at the spur of the moment, in an endeavour to disabuse his mind of any misgiving he might have entertained about them, and to set his fear at rest.

25. *David* said, 'Surely, he has wronged thee in demanding thy ewe to add to his own ewes. And certainly many partners transgress against one another, except those who believe in God and do good works; and these are but few.' And David perceived that We had tried him; so he asked forgiveness of his Lord, and fell down bowing in worship and turned to Him.³³⁹⁵

26. So We forgave him that; and indeed, he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat.³³⁹⁶

قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ
وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ
وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا
وَأَنَابَ^{السَّجْدَةُ} ٣٥

فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِندَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ
مَّآبٍ ٣٦

3395. Commentary :

David was not taken in by the mask of ordinary litigants that the two intruders had put on; he saw through the game. Though he did not lose his presence of mind and gave his decision like a sane and sedate judge, yet he realized that his control over his people had weakened and that, despite the precautions he had taken, he was not quite safe from the schemes and plots of his enemies. He felt that the incident was a reminder from God. So he adopted the only course which the righteous and the God-fearing adopt in such circumstances. He prayed to God and sought Divine protection against the schemes and conspiracies of his enemies. The insinuation behind the tale of the litigants was that David was a tyrant who was extending his domination over

small and weak neighbouring tribes.

3396. Important Words :

غفرنا (We forgave him). غفر الشيء means, he concealed or hid the thing. غفر الله له : God forgave him his sins. غفر الأمر means, he set right the affair (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 59, 200, 286 & 14 : 42.

Commentary :

The expression غفرنا له may mean, 'We gave him Our protection' or 'We set his affairs right.' The words, "he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat," show that David did not suffer from any moral defect and spiritual weakness, and most effectively negative and demolish the wicked charge of David having committed adultery as imputed to him by the Bible (2 Samuel, 11 : 4 & 5).

27. *Then We said to him, 'O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth; so judge between men with justice, and follow not vain desire, lest it should lead thee astray from the way of Allah.' Surely, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.*³³⁹⁷

- R. 3 28. "And We have not created the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the view of those who disbelieve. ^bWoe, then, to the disbelievers because of the punishment of the Fire."³³⁹⁸

29. "Shall We treat those who believe and do good works like those who act corruptly in the earth? Shall We treat the righteous like the wicked?"³³⁹⁹

يَدَاوُدَ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُمُ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ٢٧

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا
ذَٰلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا^{٢٨} فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنَ النَّارِ ٢٨

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ ٢٩

^a21 : 17; 44 : 39.

^b14 : 3; 19 : 38; 51 : 61.

^c68 : 36.

3397. Commentary :

The verse further comforts David and assures him that God will protect him against the machinations and plots of his enemies. He had not made him His vicegerent in the earth that he should come to grief at the hands of his mischievous opponents.

3398. Commentary :

With this verse the *Sūra* reverts to its original theme dealt with in the opening verses. It purports to say that the heavens and the earth and all that is between them have not been created

in vain. They serve a mighty purpose and point to the existence of an Infallible Mind, an Almighty Being Who has created them. Divine Prophets come in the world to call men to their Creator and when they come, those to whom they address their Message become divided into two groups—believers and disbelievers.

3399. Commentary :

It is to the two parties of believers and disbelievers implied in the preceding verse that the present verse refers and then proceeds to say that there lies a world of difference between them.

30. "This is a Book which We have revealed to thee, full of excellences, that they may reflect over its verses, and that those *gifted* with understanding may take heed.³⁴⁰⁰

31. ^bAnd We bestowed on David, Solomon who was an excellent servant. He was always turning *to Us*.³⁴⁰¹

32. When there were brought before him at eventide steeds of noblest breed and swift of foot,³⁴⁰²

كُتِبَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبْرَكٌ لِّدِّ بَرُّوَآئِيَّتِهِ وَ
لِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ۝

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ نِعَمَ الْعَبْدِ إِنَّهُ
أَوَّابٌ ۝

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصُّفُفُ الْجِيَادُ ۝

a6 : 93 ; 21 : 51. b27 : 17.

3400. Commentary :

The verse means to say that this Book—the Qur'ān—which contains the basic and universal principles of all religions and their permanent and imperishable teachings and contains much more that is indispensable for the growing needs and requirements of man, has been revealed to the Holy Prophet by God.

3401. Commentary :

After briefly reverting to the primary theme with which this *Sūra* had opened, the present verse gives another example of a Divine Prophet—Solomon, upon whom God had bestowed great material wealth, power and honour, but who also suffered at the hands of his evil-minded enemies. Reversion to the primary theme is meant to tell the Holy Prophet that he too, like the great Prophets, David and Solomon, will have to go through great trials and tribu-

lations in the way of God.

3402. Important Words :

صافنة (steeds) is the plural of صافنة which is fem. of صافن which is active participle from صفن. They say صفن الفرس i.e. the horse stood on three legs, the hoof of the fourth slightly touching the ground. صافن means, a horse standing upon three legs and the extremity of the hoof of the fourth leg. Standing in this posture is considered to be the peculiarity of Arabian breed which are regarded as the best bred horses. The word صافن would therefore mean, horses of the noblest breed (Lane & Aqrab).

جِيَاد (swift-footed horses) is the plural of جِيَاد which is derived from جَاد. They say جَاد الفرس i.e. the horse became swift-footed. جَاد في عدوه means, he became swift and excellent. فرس جِيَاد means, a quick-footed horse (Lane & Aqrab).

33. He said, 'I love the love of horses because they remind me of my Lord.' So great was his love of them that when they were hidden behind the veil, he said,³⁴⁰³

فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي
حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ^{٣٤٠٣}

34. 'Bring them back to me.' Then he began to stroke their legs and their necks.³⁴⁰⁴

رُدُّوْهَا عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ^{٣٤٠٤}

3403. Important Words :

عن (because) is a preposition and as such it has several meanings :

1. It denotes transition as in the saying سافرت عن البلد *i.e.* I journeyed from the town.
2. It denotes compensation as in the verse لا تجزى نفس عن نفس شيئاً *i.e.* no soul shall serve as a substitute for another soul (2 : 49).
3. It denotes superiority *i.e.* being synonymous with على as in the verse فانما يبخل عن نفسه *i.e.* And whoso is niggardly, is niggardly only against his own soul or is niggardly only to himself (47 : 39).
4. It denotes a cause as in the verse under comment and also in the verse وما نحن بتاركى آلِهتنا عن قولك *i.e.* we are not going to forsake our gods because of thy saying (11 : 54).
5. It is synonymous with بعد (after) as in the verse لتركن طبقاً عن طبق *i.e.* you will surely pass on from one stage to another (84 : 20).
6. It is also synonymous with من (from) as in the verse الذى يقبل التوبة عن عباده *i.e.* He it

is Who accepts repentance from His servants (42 : 26).

7. It has the same sense as ب (by or with) as in the verse وما ينطق عن الهوى *i.e.* nor does he speak with the desire of self-gratification (53 : 4).
8. It denotes the using of a thing as an aid or instrument as in the saying: رميت عن القوس *i.e.* I shot with or by means of the bow (Lane).

Commentary :

God had bestowed upon Solomon power and wealth. He ruled over a vast kingdom and, therefore, he had to keep a strong army. Naturally, he had a great liking for horses of good breed because cavalry formed a strong wing of his army which was so necessary to guard and protect his God-given and far-flung kingdom—a great stronghold of truth and righteousness. So Solomon's love for horses was not that of a race-goer or a professional breeder of horses. It only sprang from his love for his Creator as the horses were used for fighting in the cause of God.

3404. Commentary :

The verse shows that Solomon was seeing a horse parade and in order to show his admiration for his horses he stroked their necks and legs.

35. And We did try Solomon and We placed on his throne a *mere* body. Then he turned to God, seeking His mercy.³⁴⁰⁵

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَالْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ
جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ ③٥

36. He said, 'O my Lord, grant me forgiveness and bestow on me a kingdom that will not suit anyone after me; surely Thou art the Great Bestower.'³⁴⁰⁶

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ
مِّنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ③٦

37. So We subjected to him the wind, blowing gently by his command whithersoever he desired to go.³⁴⁰⁷

فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُخَاءً حَيْثُ
أَصَابَ ③٧

^a21 : 82; 27 : 18; 34 : 13.

3405. Commentary :

While here the words are "a mere body," in 34 : 15 the expression used is "a worm of the earth." The reference in both the places may either be to Solomon's son and heir, Rehoboam, a worthless fellow, in whose reign Solomon's kingdom fell a victim to disintegration and disruption, or to Jeroboam who raised the standard of revolt against the House of David and succeeded in winning the allegiance of ten tribes of Israel. Jeroboam was an idol-worshipper and under his lead the Israelites relapsed into image-worship (1 Kings 12 : 28).

The words "he turned to God" seem to imply that Solomon had realized that after his death his kingdom would not maintain its integrity under his incompetent and inefficient successor. So he turned to God and prayed to Him. The prayer is given in the next verse.

3406. Commentary :

As it appears from the preceding verse Solomon had foreseen that his temporal kingdom would become disrupted after his death,

through the imbecility of his foolish and worthless son, so he prayed that the spiritual kingdom which God had bestowed upon his House might continue among them. If the words "a kingdom that will not suit anyone after me" are taken in their literal sense, then Solomon's prayer would be understood to have been accepted in the sense that after his death no king possessing the power and prestige that he possessed ever appeared among the Israelites.

The words لا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي may also signify a kingdom which pertains to the individual and is not heritable.

3407. Important Words :

رخاء (blowing gently) is derived from رخا which means, it was or became soft, flabby or brittle. رخا العيش means, the life became affluent and pleasant, the life became easy or plentiful. رخاء means, a soft or gentle wind or a soft or gentle and quick wind or gentle wind that does not move anything (Lane & Aqrab).

الريح means, (1) wind, (2) a good and pure thing, (3) mercy, (4) aid against an enemy,

38. ^aAnd the giants, all sorts of builders and divers.³⁴⁰⁸

وَالشَّيَاطِينَ كُلَّ بَنَّاءٍ وَغَوَّاصٍ ۝٣٨

39. ^bAnd others bound in fetters.³⁴⁰⁹

وَأُخَرِينَ مُقَرَّبِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ۝٣٩

40. 'This is Our gift—so give freely or withhold—without reckoning.'

هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۝٤٠

41. And certainly he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat.

وَأَنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ ۝٤١

^a21 : 83; 34 : 13-14.

^b14 : 50.

(5) victory or conquest, (6) predominance and power, (7) a turn of good fortune, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 34 : 13.

Commentary :

According to the different meanings of the word رَجَح given above, the expression, سَخَرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيح would mean:

1. God granted to Solomon good and pure things of the world;
2. He aided Solomon against his enemies;
3. He was merciful to Solomon;
4. Solomon made great conquests and won victories over his enemies;
5. Solomon possessed great power, prestige and predominance.
6. The words also signify that Solomon possessed a large and powerful navy (1 Kings 9 : 26-28). See also 34 : 13.

3408. Important Words :

غَوَّاص (divers) is derived from غَاص. They say غَاصَ فِي الْمَاءِ *i.e.* he dived in or descended beneath or entered into the water to fetch out what was in it. غَائِص or غَوَّاص, the latter having

an intensive signification or implying the habit of so doing, means, one who dives in or descends beneath or enters into water, particularly one who dives in the sea for pearls and fetches them out (Lane).

Commentary :

See next verse.

3409. Commentary :

Solomon as stated in 21 : 83 and 34 : 13, 14, had subdued and subjected to his rule savage and rebellious mountain tribes. He had forced them into his service and had compelled them to work for him. الشَّيَاطِينَ (giants) of the preceding verse and الْجِن (Jinn) of 34 : 13 are the same people, and the work on which they were employed by Solomon was also of the same nature. In the Bible we have :

Now Solomon purposed to build an house for the name of the Lord and an house for his kingdom. And Solomon told three-score and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and four-score thousand men that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them (11 Chronicles 2 : 1-2).

See also 21 : 83.

- 4 42. And remember Our servant Job, ^awhen he cried unto his Lord, saying, 'Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment.'³⁴¹⁰

43. And We said to him, 'Strike and urge thy riding beast with thy foot. Yonder is cool water to wash with and a drink.'³⁴¹¹

وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ
الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ ۖ

أَرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ ۖ

^a21 : 84.

3410. Important Words :

نصب (toil) is derived from نصب (naṣaba). They say نصبه المرض *i.e.* the disease pained him or tired him. نصب (naṣiba) means, he was tired and fatigued. نصب في الأمر means, he exerted himself and laboured regarding the affair. نصب (nuṣbun) means, fatigue, toil, weariness, affliction, difficulty, distress, trouble, disease, misfortune, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

In the present and the next three verses the language used is as fittingly metaphorical as that used in the preceding several verses. It seems that the Prophet Job lived in a country of which the ruler was, as the word الشيطان (the leader of mischief) shows, a cruel and tyrannical idol-worshipper, who opposed the monotheistic teaching of Job and severely persecuted him. Job had to leave his native land and take refuge in another country and as a result of this emigration he was separated from his family and followers.

If the word الشيطان, as some authorities hold, should signify شيطان الفلاة (satan of the desert) *i.e.* thirst, the verse would mean that Job in his long and tiresome journey had suffered from thirst and fatigue. According to some other authorities the reference in the word "Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment" is to a skin

disease from which Prophet Job is said to have temporarily suffered and which left him very much exhausted.

3411. Important Words :

ركض (strike with thy foot). ار كض برجلك means, the man struck the ground with his foot. ركض الفرس برجله means, he urged the horse or spurred the horse with his feet. ار كض برجلك therefore would mean, strike thou, or tread the ground with thy feet, or as given in the text, "strike and urge the riding beast with thy foot" (Lane & Aqrab). See also 21 : 13.

Commentary :

In view of the three explanations of the words, "Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment" in the preceding verse, the reference in the present verse, may be to the Divine injunction in pursuance of which Job had to leave the country of the cruel polytheistic king and to resume his journey on his riding beast and to strike and urge it on in order to reach a place of safety soon. And as in his long and tiresome journey he greatly suffered from thirst and fatigue, he was comforted with the information that there lay ahead of him a fountain of sweet, cool water where he could slake his thirst and wash himself. Or the meaning may be that having been left alone at a place where there was no water, he was told by God to urge on his

44. «And We bestowed on him, his family and as many more with them, by way of mercy from Us, and as a reminder for men of understanding.»³⁴¹²

45. And *We said to him*, 'Take in thy hand a handful of dry twigs and strike therewith, and break not thy oath.' Indeed, We found him steadfast. An excellent servant was he. Surely, he was always turning to God.³⁴¹³

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا
وَذِكْرًا لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣٤﴾

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضَعْفًا فَاصْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنُثْ
إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعَمَ الْعَبْدِ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

“21 : 85.

riding beast as there lay ahead a fountain of cool, sweet water where he could take rest, satisfy his thirst and take a bath. Or, the verse may signify that as Job suffered from a skin disease, he was directed by God to take bath in a particular fountain whose water contained such minerals as would cure his skin disease.

It seems that the country through which Job had to travel abounded in springs and fountains.

3412. Commentary :

When, in obedience to Divine command, Job continued his journey, he not only found cool and refreshing water with which he washed himself and assuaged his thirst, he found also his family and the people from whom he had become separated.

It is also possible that on account of some skin disease from which he suffered, Job's people might have left him.

3413. Important Words :

ضَعْفًا (a handful of dry twigs) is derived from ضَعَفْتَ (qaghatha). They say 'ضَعَفْتُ الشَّيْءَ' i.e. he collected together the thing. ضَعَفْتُ الْحَدِيثَ means, he related the tradition in a confused manner; ضَعَفْتُ also means, he uttered a cry. ضَعَفْتُ (dighthun)

means, a handful of fresh or dry twigs; whatever is collected together and grasped with the hand; a bundle of rushes; what is confused and without truth or reality (Lane & Aqrab).

لَا تَحْنُثْ (break not thy oath) is derived from حَنَثَ which means, he said what was not true; he committed a sin or crime; he inclined towards what was false. حَنَثَ فِي يَمِينِهِ means, he broke or retracted his oath. حَنَثَ means, a sin or crime. بَلَغَ الْحَنَثَ means, he attained to the age when he was punishable for sin or disobedience (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

While in v. 43 Job was enjoined to urge his riding beast with his foot, in the present verse he is told to strike the beast with a bundle of twigs to make it run fast that he may be out of danger and reach a place of safety soon.

The words لَا تَحْنُثْ mean, do not incline to falsehood, i.e. make no compromise with idol-worship or polytheistic beliefs and remain steadfast in your belief in the Unity of God.

The expression لَا تَحْنُثْ meaning, break not thy oath, the verse may also signify that as Job had become separated from his people, due to negligence on their part, he had vowed that he would punish the guilty for their negligence after he

46. And remember Our servants Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, *men* of position and vision.³⁴¹⁴

وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي
الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. We chose them for a special *purpose*—reminding *people* of the abode of the Hereafter.

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. And truly, they are in Our sight among the elect *and* the best.

وَأَنَّهُمْ عِندَنَا لِنَ الْبُصْطَفَيْنِ الْآخِيَارِ ﴿٣٨﴾

49. "And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl; they were all of the best."³⁴¹⁵

وَاذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ
الْآخِيَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a6 : 87; 21 : 86-87.

joined them. When, however, he was united with them he was told by God (as the verse shows) not to be severe on them in the hour of joy and thanks-giving and to fulfil his oath in a way which should cause least distress to them.

The implied reference in this and the preceding three verses seems to be to the separation of the Holy Prophet from his kith and kin by his emigration to Medina, where after a few years not only were his own people united with him but he found many other most sincere and devoted followers—the *Anṣār*. When eventually he triumphed over his own people, he forgave them with a large-heartedness and magnanimity which has remained unequalled in the whole history of the world. This was all in harmony with the Divine plan that his resemblance with Job might be established.

3414. **Important Words :**

ايدى (hands) is the plural of يد which means, benefit, bounty, favour; (2) power, influence;

(3) assistance, help, protection, (4) troops, host, army; (5) possessions, wealth; (6) promise and (7) submission (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 65 & 9 : 29.

ابصار (vision) is the plural of بصر which means, the eye, the sense of sight; knowledge; understanding; vision (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 8; 6 : 104.

3415. **Commentary :**

اليسع (Elisha) was the disciple and successor of Elijah. He lived from 928 B.C. to 838 B.C. See also 6 : 87.

ذوالكفل (Dhu'l-Kifl). The Prophet known by this name appears to be the Prophet Ezekiel who is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs. For a detailed note on Ezekiel, see 21 : 86.

اسماعيل (Ishmael), Prophet Abraham's son from Hagar. He was the elder brother of Prophet Isaac and a progenitor of the Holy Prophet of Islam. See also 2 : 126.

50. This is a reminder. And the righteous will surely have excellent retreat—

51. Gardens of Eternity, with *their* gates thrown open to them,

52. “Reclining therein *on cushions*; they will therein call *at pleasure* for plenteous fruit and drink.

53. And with them will be ^b*chaste women*, restraining their looks, companions of equal age.³⁴¹⁶

54. This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning.³⁴¹⁷

55. Verily, this is Our provision which will never be exhausted.³⁴¹⁸

56. This is *for the believers*. “But for the rebellious there is an evil place of return—

هَذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ مَّفْتَحَةٌ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ ﴿٥١﴾

مُتَكِّينَ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ
وَشَرَابٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَصْرٌ ظَرْفُ أَتْرَابٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾

إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَفَادٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

هَذَا وَإِنَّ لِلطَّاغِينَ لَشَرَّ مَآبٍ ﴿٥٦﴾

^a18 : 32; 36 : 57; 83 : 24.

^b55 : 57.

^c78 : 22-23.

3416. Important Words :

اترَاب (companions of equal age) is the plural of تَرْب (tirbun) which means, one born at the same time with another; a contemporary in birth, an equal in age; a match, a peer (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The present and the preceding two verses embody a complete picture of the material benefits and blessings which are bestowed upon believers in this very life and thus furnish a proof that they will also have the blessings promised to them in the life to come.

3417. Commentary :

The words, “the Day of Reckoning,” besides

referring to the Day of Judgment, here also mean, “the day of national reckoning” when a whole people become deserving of reward or Divine punishment according to their deeds and actions. A day of reckoning comes to every individual, community, and nation in this very life.

3418. Important Words :

نفاد (exhaustion) is derived from نفد which means, it came to an end, it became spent or exhausted. They say, نفد زاد القوم, i.e. the provision of the people became exhausted. أنفدت البئر means, the well lost its water. نفاد means, wasting away; getting exhausted; ceasing; destruction (Aqrab).

57. Hell, wherein they will burn.
What an evil resting-place!

جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. This is *what they will have*. So let them taste it—^aa boiling fluid, and an intensely cold and stinking drink.³⁴¹⁹

هَذَا فَلْيَذُوقُوهُ حَمِيمٌ وَغَسَاقٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. And *various kinds of* other torments of a similar nature.^{3419A}

وَاٰخَرِمْ شَكْلِهٖ اَزْوَاجٌ ط ﴿٥٩﴾

60. 'This is a host of yours rushing headlong with you, O Leaders of mischief.' No welcome for them. They must burn in the Fire.³⁴²⁰

هٰذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ لَا مَرْجَاۤءَ لَهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ ﴿٦٠﴾

^a78 : 26. ^b18 : 54; 21 : 40; 52 : 14.

3419. Important Words :

غَسَاق (intensely cold and stinking drink) is derived from غَسَقَ. They say غَسَقَ اللَّيْلُ i.e. the night became intensely dark. غَسَقَتْ عَيْنَاهُ means, his eyes shed tears. غَسَاق means, the ichor or watery matter and thick purulent matter that will flow and drip from the skins of the inmates of Hell, or the washings of them or their tears; intensely cold; cold and stinking (Lane). See also 17 : 79.

Commentary :

The inmates of Hell will be made to drink intensely hot or intensely cold water. As they did not make proper use of their God-given faculties and went to extremes in using them and did not follow the golden mean, so they will be made to drink extremely hot or extremely cold water.

3419A. Commentary :

Besides the meaning given in the text, the

verse may also mean, "And like them there will be other groups with similar records."

3420. Important Words :

مُقْتَحِمٌ (rushing headlong) is derived from قَحِمَ. They say قَحِمَ فِي الْأَمْرِ i.e. he entered into the affair without consideration. اقْتَحِمَ الْأَمْرَ means, he threw himself into the affair with vehemence and difficulty.

Commentary :

When leaders of disbelief will go to Hell, they will be told that a host of their followers will also enter into fire along with them. As the latter rushed to follow their leaders blindly and unthinkingly rejecting truth, so they will enter Hell rushing headlong.

The words لَا مَرْجَاۤءَ لَهُمْ (no welcome for them) may be taken as having been spoken by the angels in charge of Hell or by the leaders of disbelief who would already be in Hell.

61. They will say, 'Nay, it is you. No welcome for you *in truth*. It is you who prepared this for us. What an evil resting-place it is!' ³⁴²¹

قَالُوا بَلْ أَنْتُمْ لَا مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ أَنْتُمْ قَدْ مُتِمُّوهُ
لَنَا قِبَسَ الْقَرَارِ ①

62. They will *also* say, 'Our Lord, whosoever prepared this for us—so ^aadd to him a double punishment in the Fire.' ³⁴²²

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هَذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا
فِي النَّارِ ②

63. And they will say, 'What has happened to us that we see not the men whom we used to reckon among the wicked?' ³⁴²³

وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرَى رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِّنَ
الْأَشْرَارِ ③

64. 'Is it because we *unjustly* took them for a laughing stock or have the eyes missed them?' ³⁴²⁴

أَتَخَذْنَاهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمْ الْأَبْصَارُ ④

65. Surely, this is a fact—^bthe disputing together of the people of the Fire.

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ⑤

^a7 : 39.

^b34 : 32; 40 : 48.

3421. Commentary :

The words of this verse seem to have been spoken against the leaders of disbelief by their blind followers. Both the leaders and the led will curse one another. It is human nature that when man is confronted with the evil consequences of his deeds, he tries to shift the blame to others. This is exactly what the guilty people generally do when they find themselves face to face with the dreadful results of their wicked deeds.

3422. Commentary :

The followers of the leaders of disbelief will

invoke the curse of God upon the heads of their erstwhile leaders.

3423. Commentary :

The reference in the word "the men" is to the believers.

3424. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the inmates of Hell will say to one another, "What is the matter with us that we do not see here those men whom we looked down upon as of no consequence and whom we mocked and ridiculed in the earthly life. Did they not deserve our ridicule and were really good and godly men or are they in Hell but we do not see them?"

- 5 66. Say, 'I am only a Warner; and there is no God but Allah, the One, the Most Supreme.³⁴²⁵

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ ۚ وَمَا مِن إِلَهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. 'The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between the two, the Mighty, the Great For-giver.'

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ
الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. Say, 'It is a big news,³⁴²⁶

قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. 'From which you are turning away.

أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

70. 'I had no knowledge of the exalted Assembly when they discussed the matter among themselves,³⁴²⁷

مَا كَانَ لِي مِن عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

3425. Commentary :

After having briefly referred to some of the Prophets who had to suffer great hardships at the hands of their enemies and who endured those hardships with great patience and fortitude and also after having dealt with the subject that opposition to God's Messengers never goes unpunished and their acceptance unrewarded, the *Sūra* towards its close reverts (as is the invariable rule in the Qur'ān) to the main subject with which it had opened, namely, the subject of Divine Unity. The Holy Prophet is enjoined to tell disbelievers that from the accounts of the life of Divine Messengers, mentioned in the preceding verses, they must have realized that God is One and that He is the Almighty and the Most Supreme and that it is to preach and establish His Unity in the world that the Holy Prophet has been sent.

3426. Important Words :

نَبَأ (big news) is infinitive noun from نَبَأَ

نَبَأَ (naba'a). أَنْبَأَ إِياه means, he informed him or it. نَبَأٌ means, a piece of information; an announcement; or an announcement of great importance from which results great knowledge; message; news; or news which fills the heart of a person with fear (Aqrab & Lane). See also 6 : 6.

Commentary :

"The big news" may refer to the great event of the revelation of the Qur'ān and the advent of the Holy Prophet.

3427. Commentary :

It appears from 2 : 30 and from the Ḥadīth that when God decrees to raise a Prophet in the world, He discloses His intention to those angels who are nearest to Him. They discuss this affair of the highest import among themselves. These angels are referred to as "the exalted Assembly" in the verse under comment. The Holy Prophet is represented as saying that he had no knowledge of what was being discussed and debated in heavens about his being entrusted with a great Divine mission.

71. 'But this that it has been revealed to me, that I am a plain Warner.'

72. ^a*Remember* when thy Lord said to the angels, 'I am about to create man from clay';³⁴²⁸

73. ^b'And so when I have fashioned him *in perfection*, and have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall ye down in submission to him.'³⁴²⁹

74. So the angels submitted, all of them together.

75. But Iblīs *did not*. He behaved proudly, and was of those who disbelieved.³⁴³⁰

76. ^c*God* said, 'O Iblīs, what hindered thee from submitting to what I had created with My two hands? Is it that thou art *too* proud or art thou *really* of the exalted ones?'

إِنْ يُؤَخِّرِ إِلَى إِلَّا أَنَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ٤١

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ٤٢

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ

سُجَّدِينَ ٤٣

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ٤٤

إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ٤٥

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتَ

بِيَدَيَّ اسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ٤٦

^a2 : 35 ; 7 : 12-13 ; 15 : 29-33 ; 17 : 62 ; 18 : 51. ^b15 : 30 ; 32 : 10. ^c7 : 13 ; 15 : 33.

3428. Commentary :

The verse refers to God's intention which He disclosed to "the exalted Assembly" of the select angels and which the angels had been discussing, as mentioned in verse 70 above. Verses 72-86, however, may apply equally to every Prophet, but they have particular application to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. This and the next verse purport to say that when a Prophet is raised in the world, angels are commanded to help him in the furtherance of his cause and to render null and void all the schemes and machinations of his enemies. See also 15 : 29-45.

3429. Commentary :

This and the next verse mean to say that when

a Messenger is entrusted with his great mission, and Divine revelation descends on him, angels begin to help him in his great mission. Or they may mean that men of angelic nature accept his lead and help to spread his Message.

3430. Commentary :

Whereas men of angelic nature give their allegiance and support to the Prophet of the day, those of satanic nature oppose and fight him. For the meaning of the word إِبْلِيس see 2 : 35.

The words "what I had created with my two hands" seem to signify that God had endowed Adam with perfect faculties for spiritual as well as material progress.

77. He said, 'I am better than he. ^aThou hast created me of fire and him hast Thou created of clay.'³⁴³¹

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ

مِنْ طِينٍ ④

78. ^bGod said, 'Then get out hence, for, surely thou art rejected.'³⁴³²

قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَاجِعٌ ⑤

79. "And surely on thee shall rest My curse till the Day of Judgment."

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ⑥

80. He said, ^d"My Lord, then grant me respite till the day when they shall be raised."³⁴³³

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ⑦

81. God said, "Certainly thou art of the respited ones,

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ⑧

82. ^f"Till the day of the appointed time."³⁴³⁴

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ⑨

83. He said, 'So by Thy might, ^gI will surely lead them all astray.

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَا غُورِيَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ⑩

^a7 : 13 ; 15 : 28 ; 55 : 161.

^b7 : 14; 15 : 35.

^c15 : 36.

^d7 : 15; 15 : 37; 17 : 63.

^e7 : 16; 15 : 38; 17 : 64.

^f15 : 39.

^g7 : 17-18; 15 : 40.

3431. Commentary :

The opponents of a Prophet always regard themselves as superior to him in power, position and prestige. It hurts their sense of pride to give their allegiance to a man whom they consider to be like them or even inferior to them. The main obstacle in the way of their accepting the truth is the false sense of pride and superiority. See also 7 : 13 and 15 : 34.

3432. Commentary :

The pronoun ^{ها} in the expression ^{منها} (from hence) does not refer to post-mortal Heaven because Heaven is a place where Satan could not possibly enter and from which no one who has once entered is turned out (15 : 49). In fact the pronoun refers to that state of apparent bliss which men enjoy before the advent of a

Prophet, and which is represented in the Qur'an as ^{جنة} (garden).

3433. Commentary :

The clause, *the day when they shall be raised*, signifies the time of the spiritual rebirth of man, when having attained to the stage of ^{النفس المطمئنة} (the soul at peace) he becomes quite immune to spiritual fall. It does not signify the Day of Resurrection after death, because there is no possibility of man being seduced by Satan after his death. See also 15 : 37.

3434. Commentary :

The words, *till the day of the appointed time*, may mean, till the day when truth finally triumphs over falsehood and the votaries of falsehood are completely crushed. See also 15 : 39.

84. "Except Thy chosen servants from among them."³⁴³⁵

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. God said, 'Then the truth is, and the truth I speak,

قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. ^bThat I will certainly fill Hell with thee and with those who follow thee, all together."³⁴³⁶

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّنْ تَتَّبِعُكَ مِنْهُمْ

أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. Say, "I ask not of you any reward for it, nor am I of those who are given to affectation."³⁴³⁷

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. ^dIt is nothing but a Reminder for all peoples.

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

89. 'And you shall surely know the truth of it after a while.'³⁴³⁸

وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

^a15 : 41; 17 : 66. ^b11 : 120; 15 : 44; 32 : 14. ^c25 : 58; 42 : 24. ^d12 : 105; 81 : 28.

3435. Commentary :

The words "chosen servants" apply particularly to the Prophets who are completely immune to the temptations and seductions of Satan. They can commit no sin and, therefore, are completely free from spiritual fall. See also 15 : 41.

3436. Commentary :

The dialogue between God and Satan, as mentioned in the above verses, does not refer to any talk that actually took place but represents, in metaphorical language, the state of things as they exist at the time when a Prophet is raised. The "man" referred to in verse 72 above stands for the Prophet of the day, particularly, the Holy Prophet; and *Iblis* represents those wicked and evil-minded persons who oppose him and seek to impede and retard the progress of his mission.

3437. Commentary :

This verse makes it clear that بشر (man) re-

ferred to in v. 72 above is the Holy Prophet, since in the present verse he is represented as saying that he seeks no recompense or reward for preaching the message of truth and for calling men to God. Exactly the same expression has been mentioned as having been used by the Holy Prophet about himself at several places in the Qur'ān (25 : 58; 34 : 48; etc).

3438. Commentary :

The Holy Prophet is here represented as saying to disbelievers that they will not have to wait for long to realise the truth of his mission. And, thus it actually came to pass. The prophecies contained in the Qur'ān about the future progress of Islam and the defeat and destruction of disbelief were fulfilled in the Holy Prophet's own life-time when the whole of Arabia joined the fold of Islam.

CHAPTER 39

AL - ZUMAR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context

Most authorities including Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Ikrama agree that this is a Meccan *Sūra*. Like the preceding five *Sūras* with which it has great resemblance in style and subject-matter, this *Sūra* was revealed early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Some writers like Rodwell and Muir assign it to the late Meccan period. They base their opinion on v. 11, which, according to them, embodies a reference to the Hijrat of the Holy Prophet to Medina. But the reference, as some other writers think, might as well be to the Emigration to Abyssinia which took place in the 4th year of the Call. The latter view seems to be nearer reality. Predominance of scholarly opinion is, as stated above, in favour of the *Sūra* having been revealed early in the Holy Prophet’s life at Mecca but some verses also support Rodwell’s view.

The *Sūra* is the last of the group of Chapters beginning with Saba’ which have a striking resemblance in style and subject-matter. The principal theme of these *Sūras* is Divine revelation with special reference to the revelation of the Qur’ān and the doctrine of the Unity of God. The fact that there is one Designer and One Controller and Creator of the whole universe is inescapably inferable from the order, adaptation, proportion and co-ordination which pervade the whole universe and to which all the sciences bear undeniable testimony. The success of Divine Messengers with their extremely meagre resources against very powerful enemies constitutes another argument to prove God’s existence and Unity. To reinforce this argument a study of the accounts of different peoples to whom God’s Messengers preached their Messages is strongly recommended. The study shows how a people steeped deep in sin and iniquity and stuck fast in the morass of moral turpitude, by following a Divine Prophet, rise to the pinnacles of spiritual glory. This rising of a morally defunct community to a vigorous spiritual life is indeed a strong argument in favour of *النشور* i.e. the rising to life of the physically dead in the Hereafter. These subjects form the main theme of the present *Sūra* as also of its five predecessors.

In the immediately preceding *Sūra* the Holy Prophet was represented as saying that he asked for no reward for inviting men to God and for showing them the way to eternal life and that he sought no honour or aggrandisement for himself, but only wished for the welfare and well-being of all. The present *Sūra* opens with the declaration that the Qur’ān has been revealed by the Wise and Almighty God and that those alone achieve true honour and real success who accept and live up to its teaching as it contains all eternal truths. God has decreed that principles and ideals taught by the Qur’ān will become established in the world and that the Holy Prophet has been commissioned to spread its teaching. So why should he seek any reward from men when God Himself is his Rewarder?

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra* opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and proceeds to deal with the need, purpose and supreme object of all revealed Books and Divine Prophets which is the establishment of Unity of God on earth. The greatest impediment that bars the way to the achievement of this great and noble object, lies in the fact that man is prone to worship false gods—the idols of his own creation. Of all forms of idolatry, perhaps the most hideous and most prevalent, and which has done the greatest injury to man's spiritual development, is the belief that Jesus is Son of God. God, however, being the sole Creator and Controller of the whole universe, does not need a son to help Him in the conduct of affairs of the world. The *Sūra* cites the most beautiful and consummate design and order in the Universe as a further argument in support of the belief that there is only one Designing Mind behind all Existence. Three stages of the نطفة (sperm-drop), علقة (clot) and مضغة (lump of flesh) through which a man passes before his birth, are adduced as an additional argument. It is such a God, says the *Sūra*, Who deserves and demands our adoration and to Whose worship man is invited by the Qur'ān. It is to be regretted, however, that whenever a Prophet had invited men to God, only a small minority accepted his Message.

After having briefly discussed the need and purpose of Divine revelation the *Sūra* proceeds to give two very strong and sound arguments in support of that phenomenon : (1) That those who invent lies against God, and those who reject truth, never succeed in life. Failure and ignominy dog their footsteps. (2) The Prophets of God and those who accept them and follow their lead always meet with success and their cause prospers. These two arguments constitute an infallible criterion to judge the truth of a claimant to Divine revelation. Judged by these standards, the claim of the Holy Prophet as a Divine Messenger, and of the Qur'ān as Heavenly revelation, stands unchallenged and proved beyond doubt. The *Sūra* gives one more argument in support of the truth of the Qur'ān and of the Holy Prophet, viz., that while their true followers succeed in winning the pleasure of God and worldly power, prosperity, and prestige, disbelievers meet with failure, frustration and disgrace in life and end by drawing upon themselves the wrath of God.

After having warned them of the consequences of a sinful life, the *Sūra* holds out to the sinners a message of hope and good cheer that, however deep they might fall into sin, they are never beyond redemption. The God of Islam is a Merciful, Gracious, Kind and Forgiving God. He can and does forgive the sins of His servants. His mercy encompasses all things. He only requires change of heart on the part of the sinner; He then turns to him with forgiveness and mercy. But this message of solace and comfort is also attended with a firm warning that the sinner has to work out his own destiny. No vicarious sacrifice can save him. He is vouchsafed many opportunities to repent and reform, but if he continues to walk in evil ways deliberately he is severely punished.

Towards the close the *Sūra* devotes quite a few verses to the description of the Day of Resurrection; how at the first blowing of the trumpet all men will fall into a swoon and at the second they will find themselves standing before God's Judgment Seat, waiting to hear the Divine Judgment, after which the good and the righteous will be escorted to Paradise where they will be greeted with the greetings of peace by the angels in Heaven, and the guilty ones will be driven to Hell where they will burn in scorching fire.

سُورَةُ الزُّمَرِ مَكِّيَّةٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾

1. ^aIn the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁴³⁹

2. ^bThe revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.^{3439A}

3. ^cSurely, it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee with truth; so worship Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience.³⁴⁴⁰

4. Hearken, it is to Allah *alone* that sincere obedience is due. And those who take for protectors others beside Him *say*, 'We serve them only that they may bring us near to Allah in station.' Surely, ^dAllah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Surely, Allah guides not him who is an ungrateful liar.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ②

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاَعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ③

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ④ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ⑤

^a1 : 1. ^b32 : 3; 36 : 6; 40 : 3; 41 : 3; 46 : 3. ^c5 : 49; 6 : 106.
^d4 : 142; 22 : 70; 32 : 26.

3439. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3439A. Commentary :

The principal theme of this *Sūra*, as of its five predecessors, is Divine revelation with a pointed reference to the revelation of the Qur'ān. See also Introduction to the *Sūra*.

3440. Commentary :

After having briefly referred to the subject of Quranic revelation in the previous two verses, the *Sūra* proceeds, in the present verse, to deal with the supreme need and purpose of all

revealed Books and Divine Prophets, namely, the establishment of God's Unity in the world. The greatest impediment in the way of the achievement of this most noble object (the verse goes on to say) is that man is prone to worship false gods, the idols of his own imagination, such as saints and holy men; wealth, power and passion; inherited beliefs and customs, etc., always pretending to believe that these can help him to understand and realise the Divine Being. All this the Qur'ān dubs as mere lie and self-deception.

5. ^aIf Allah had desired to take to Himself a son, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of what He creates. Holy is He! He is Allah, the One, the Most Supreme.^{3440A}

6. ^bHe created the heavens and the earth in accordance with *the requirements of wisdom*. He makes the night to cover the day, and He makes the day to cover the night; ^cand He has pressed the sun and the moon into service; each pursues *its* course until an appointed time. Harken, *it is He alone Who* is the Mighty, the Great Forgiver.³⁴⁴¹

7. ^dHe created you from a single being; then from that He made its mate; and He has sent down for you of the cattle eight pairs. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in threefold darkness. This is Allah, your Lord. His is the kingdom. There is no God but He. Whither then are you being turned away?³⁴⁴²

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَا صُطِفَ مِنْهَا يَخْلُقُ
مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَنَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ⑤

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يَكْوَرُ اللَّيْلُ عَلَى
النَّهَارِ وَيَكْوَرُ النَّهَارُ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِإِجَلٍ مُسَمًّى إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْغَفَّارُ ⑥

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَأَنزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَنِينَةً أَزْوَاجًا يَخْلُقَكُمْ
فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي
ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُصَوَّرُونَ ⑦

^{a2} : 117; 10 : 69; 17 : 112; 18 : 5; 19 : 89-93. ^{b6} : 74; 14 : 20; 16 : 4; 29 : 45.

^{c7} : 55; 13 : 3; 29 : 62; 31 : 30; 35 : 14. ^{d4} : 2; 7 : 190; 16 : 73; 30 : 22.

3440A. Commentary :

The most prevalent and perhaps the most hideous form of idolatry which has done the greatest injury to man's religious instinct and his spiritual development and which has, therefore, quite rightly been condemned and denounced unsparingly and repeatedly in the Qur'ān is the dogma of Jesus's being the only son of God. It is this most blasphemous of all Christian dogmas which the present verse seeks to controvert; the argument advanced being that as God is the sole Creator of all things and He is قَهَّار i.e. Most

Supreme, He does not stand in need of a son. The argument is continued in the next verse.

3441. Commentary :

This verse adduces as a further argument the creation of heavens and earth and the existence of perfect design and order in the universe in support of the belief that there is One Intelligent Designing Mind behind all Existence. See also 36 : 41.

3442. Commentary :

The word أَنزَلَ (has sent down) which is transitive from نَزَلَ has different significations when used with regard to different things. When used in

8. If you are ungrateful, surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, *being independent* of you. And He is not pleased with ungratefulness in His servants. But if you are grateful, He likes it in you. "And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return; and He will inform you of what you have been doing. Surely, He knows full well all that is hidden in the breasts."³⁴⁴³

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ
الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ
وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

^{a6} : 165; 35 : 19; 53 : 39.

connection with the Word of God, it means أوحى *i.e.* He revealed. And when used about things of constant daily use, it means أعطى *i.e.* he gave or bestowed. The word has been used in the latter sense in the present verse and in vv. 7 : 27 and 57 : 26.

Special reference in the words "eight pairs of cattle" is to the pairs of goat, sheep, camel and the ox mentioned in 6 : 144-145, perhaps because they are animals of daily use for man. The expression "the threefold darkness," may refer to the three stages of development of the human child, *viz.*, نطفة (sperm-drop), علقة (clot) and مضغة (lump of flesh) or to the other three forms which are described in the following three verses:

- (1) He is created from a gushing fluid which issues forth from between the loins and the breast-bones (86 : 7-8).
- (2) He it is Who fashions you in the wombs

as He wills (3 : 7).

- (3) Verily, God has brought you forth from the inside of your mothers (16 : 79).

Or the words, "the threefold darkness" may refer to the three critical periods of pregnancy, when a little carelessness may cause miscarriage, *i.e.*, (a) from the second to the third month of pregnancy; (b) from the third to the fifth month and (c) the beginning of the eighth month.

3443 Commentary :

شكر as explained elsewhere (14 : 8) denotes the proper use of Divine favours in a manner intended by God. كفر is the misuse of those favours. It is the proper or improper use of God-given powers, faculties, and of Divine favours, blessings and opportunities which is called شكر (thankfulness) or كفر (ingratitude) in the Qur'ān.

9. ^aAnd when an affliction befalls a man, he calls upon his Lord, turning *penitently* to Him. Then, when He confers upon him a favour from Himself, he forgets what he used to pray for before, and begins to assign rivals to Allah, that he may lead *people* astray from His way. Say, 'Benefit from thy disbelief a little; while thou art surely of the inmates of the Fire.'

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ
ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُو
إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَتَّبِعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ

النَّارِ ⑨

10. Is he who prays devoutly to God in the hours of the night, prostrating himself and standing in prayer and fears the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord, like him who is disobedient. Say, ^b'Are those who know equal to those who know not?' Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed.³⁴⁴⁴

مَنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ أَنْاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ
الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ⑩

2 11. Say, 'O ye My servants who believe, fear your Lord. ^cThere is good for those who do good in this life. And Allah's earth is spacious. Verily, ^dthe steadfast will have their reward without measure.'³⁴⁴⁵

أَلْ يَعْبَادُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا
هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ
نَمَّا يُوقِي الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ⑪

^a11 : 10-11; 17 : 68; 30 : 34; 39 : 50.

^b40 : 59.

^c16 : 31.

^d3 : 58; 11 : 112; 16 : 97.

3444. Commentary :

The verse refers to two classes of men—believers who are described as obedient men endowed with knowledge and understanding; and disbelievers who are their opposites.

3445. Commentary :

This verse warns believers that they will be made to pass through trials and tribulations and will have to leave even their hearths and homes

for the sake of God. It is when they have successfully met the ordeal that they will find God's earth wide and spacious for them and will have their reward from God without measure. The reference in the verse seems to be to the Holy Prophet's Hijrat to Medina. It is in Medina that Islam found a congenial soil for expansion and consolidation and it is there that Muslim were given possession of God's spacious earth

12. ^aSay, 'Verily I am commanded to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion.'

13. 'And I am commanded to be the first of those who submit to Him.'

14. ^bSay, 'Indeed I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of the great day.'

15. ^cSay, 'It is Allah I worship, being sincere to Him in my religion.'³⁴⁴⁶

16. 'So worship what you like beside Him.' Say, 'Surely, the losers will be those who ruin their souls and ruin their families on the Day of Resurrection.' Beware! that is surely the manifest loss.'³⁴⁴⁷

17. ^dThey will have over them coverings of fire, and beneath them similar coverings. It is this against which Allah warns His servants. 'O My servants, take Me, then, for your Protector.'

18. And those who eschew the worship of false gods and turn to Allah—for them is glad tidings. So give good tidings to My servants,

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ ۝١٢

وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝١٣

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ

عَظِيمٍ ۝١٤

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدْ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ۚ ۝١٥

فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ
الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ

إِلَّا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ۝١٦

لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
ظُلَلٌ ۚ ذَلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهَ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ يُعْبَادُونَ فَاتَّقُوا ۝١٧

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا
إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ۝١٨

^a13 : 37; 18 : 111; 72 : 21.

^b6 : 16; 10 : 16.

^c40 : 65 ; 98 : 6.

^d7 : 42; 18 : 30.

3446. Commentary :

In the brief space of four verses, viz., 3rd, 4th, 12th and 15th, the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to be sincere to God in religion. These verses seemed to prepare Muslims for the severe trials that lay ahead of them in Medina. The *Sūra* was revealed in the later Meccan period, when

Muslims were leaving for Medina singly, or in small groups.

3447. Commentary :

The verse warns idolatrous disbelievers that the day was fast approaching when they will discover to their mortification that they had ruined themselves. That day dawned with the Prophet's departure from Mecca.

19. "Who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof. It is they whom Allah has guided, and it is they who are men of understanding."³⁴⁴⁸

20. Can he, then, against whom the sentence of punishment has become due, *be saved*? Canst thou rescue him who is in the Fire?

21. But for them who fear their Lord ^bthere are lofty mansions built over lofty mansions, beneath which rivers flow. Allah has made that promise; *and* Allah breaks not *His* promise.³⁴⁴⁹

22. Hast thou not seen that 'Allah sends down water from the sky, and causes it to flow in *the form of* streamlets in the earth and then brings forth thereby herbage, ^dvarying in its colours? Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; then He reduces it to broken straw. In that verily is a reminder for men of understanding.³⁴⁵⁰

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْأُولَاءُ ۝١٩

أَفَنُحْ قَٰتٍ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ
مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ۝٢٠

لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا
غُرَفٌ مُّبْنِيَةٌ لَا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَعَدَ
اللَّهُ لَا يَخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْوَعْدَ ۝٢١

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ
يَنَابِيعٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُّخْتَلِفًا
أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفًّاءَ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ
حُطَامًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝٢٢

a7 : 205. b25 : 76; 29 : 59; 34 : 38. c22 : 6; 30 : 49-51; 35 : 28; 45 : 6. d13 : 5; 16 : 14.

3448. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when two equally permissible courses are open to a believer, he adopts the one which is productive of best results.

3449. Commentary :

The difference in ranks of believers in Paradise shows that there will be a corresponding difference in their endeavour and labour which signifies that the next life will not be a life of inactivity and lassitude but of incessant work and continuous advance.

3450. Important Words :

يَنَابِيع is the plural of يَنْبُوع which is derived from نَبَعَ. They say نَبَعَ الْمَاءُ i.e. the water issued forth from the spring. يَنْبُوع means, a spring of water; a rivulet or streamlet in which there is much water. One would say :

فَجَرَّ اللَّهُ يَنَابِيعَ الْحِكْمَةِ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ
i.e. God caused to flow springs of wisdom on his tongue (Aqrab).

حُطَامًا (broken straw) is derived from حَطَمَ which means, it broke or became broken into pieces. They say حَطَمَ فَلَانًا أَهْلَهُ i.e. the family of such a

- 3 23. "Is he then whose bosom Allah has opened for *the acceptance of* Islam, so that he possesses a light from his Lord, *like him who is groping in the darkness of disbelief?* Woe, then, to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah! They are in manifest error.³⁴⁵¹

24. Allah has sent down the best Discourse—a Book, *whose verses are mutually supporting and repeated in diverse forms* whereat do creep the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah; He guides therewith whom He pleases. "And he whom Allah adjudges astray—he shall have no guide."³⁴⁵²

أَفَنَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ
مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانًى
تَتَشَبَّهُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ
جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ
اللَّهُ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ
فَمَا لَهُ مِن هَادٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

^a6 : 126. ^b15 : 88. ^c17 : 98.

one rendered him a broken man. *حطّمته السن* means, age broke him or rendered him infirm. *حطامًا* means, what is broken into pieces; fragments, pieces (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse means to say that when the earth becomes spiritually parched, God sends down rain in the form of Divine revelation and then it receives a new life and fruits and flowers of different hues, tastes and flavours grow, *i.e.* when a Divine Reformer appears, a community of righteous and God-fearing men is born, and pious and learned 'Ulamā teach men the Word of God. Then there is a long interval and God's Word is forgotten and His commandments are defied and disobeyed. Again, the earth becomes parched and dried up and again a generation of evil men, who are as good as dry fuel fit to be thrown into fire, is born and takes the place of good men. Thus the circle goes on.

3451. Commentary :

Whereas in the preceding verse reference was made to Divine revelation, in the present verse we are told that now that the Qur'ān has been revealed those whose hearts God has opened for the acceptance of truth have accepted it but those who have chosen to grope in the darkness of disbelief have rejected it. These two classes of men cannot be equal. The verse further says that truth carries with it a strong conviction. The teaching of Islam has such depth and vastness that it makes the hearts of believers to expand and overflow with Divine knowledge and love. It certainly opens up new and endless vistas of thought, knowledge and truth.

3452. Important Words :

مُتَشَابِهًا (mutually supporting) is derived from *شَبِهَ*. They say *شَبَّهَهُ بِهِ* *i.e.* he made it to be like that; he likened it to that. See also 3 : 8,

25. Is he, then, who has nothing but his own face to protect him with from the evil punishment on the Day of Resurrection, *like him who is secure?* And it will be said to the wrongdoers, 'Taste ye what you used to earn.'³⁴⁵³

26. Those, who were before them rejected *Our Messenger*, so ^athe punishment came upon them whence they knew not.

27. So Allah made them taste humiliation in the present life and ^bthe punishment of the Hereafter will certainly be greater, if they but knew;

أَفَنُ يَتَّبِعِي بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَآتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

فَآذَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ
لَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

^a16 : 27; 59 : 3.

^b13 : 35; 68 : 34.

مثنى (repeated in diverse forms) is derived from ثنى. They say ثناه *i.e.* he doubled it, or folded it. ثناه (*thanna-hu*) means, he made it two or called it two; he repeated it (Lane & Aqrab) See also 15 : 88.

اقشعر (creep) is aorist from اقشعر which means, he or it quaked, shuddered or tumbled; it (the skin) dried up. اقشعر الشعر means, the hair stood upon end on account of fear or cold. They say أخذته قشعريرة *i.e.* a tremor of the skin seized him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The Qur'ān is the last Heavenly Message. Divine revelation has found completest and most perfect expression in it. In the verse under comment the Qur' ān has been described as كتابا متشابها which means that it is a Book which is susceptible of different interpretations but these interpretations are consistent and support each other. There is no contradiction or inconsistency anywhere in the Qur'ān. This constitutes one of its inimitable excellences. Another excellence of the Qur'ān lies in the

fact that it has made extensive use of metaphors, allegories and parables. This greatly adds to the beauty and grace of its style and assures vastness of meaning in the fewest possible words. Again, the Qur'ān is called مثنى which signifies that it describes its basic beliefs and principles repeatedly and in various ways and forms, in order to emphasize their importance, necessity and purpose.

The word also signifies that some of the teachings of the Qur'ān resemble those of other revealed Scriptures and some are new and unapproachable and incomparable in their excellences and beauties.

3453. Commentary :

The words, *Is he, then, who has nothing but his own face to protect him with*, signify the severity of the punishment which disbelievers will receive on the Day of Reckoning. They will become so confused and confounded by the severe punishment that instead of protecting their faces—the most sensitive part of the body—they will put them forward. This condition of disbelievers is also depicted in 14 : 51 and 54 : 49.

28. ^aAnd, indeed, We have set forth to men all kinds of parables in this Qur'an that they may take heed.³⁴⁵⁴

29. ^bWe have revealed the Qur'an in Arabic wherein there is no deviation from rectitude, that they may become righteous.³⁴⁵⁵

30. Allah sets forth a parable: A man belonging to several partners, disagreeing with one another, and a man belonging wholly to one man. Are the two equal in condition? All praise belongs to Allah. But most of them know not.³⁴⁵⁶

31. ^cSurely, thou wilt die, and surely they too will die.

32. ^dThen surely on the Day of Resurrection you will dispute with one another before your Lord.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ
كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّسُونَ
وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِّرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِينَ مَثَلًا الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a17 : 90; 30 : 59.

^b12 : 3; 42 : 8; 43 : 4.

^c23 : 16.

^d23 : 17.

3454. Commentary :

The verse develops the argument given in v. 24, viz., that the Qur'an contains the best Message for mankind, in that it has comprehensively dealt with all those principles and teachings which have deep bearing on man's spiritual and moral development, and also with all those subjects which can make his life useful and pleasant. It has also provided right guidance in matters of belief and conduct about which the various existing religions disagree.

3455. Commentary :

For an explanation of قرآنًا عربيًّا see 12 : 3.

3456. Important Words :

متشاكسون (disagree with one another) is derived

from شكس i.e. he was or became refractory, perverse, stubborn or obstinate or evil in disposition or repugnant. تشاكسوا means, they treated one another with harshness; they opposed each other. متشاكسون means, disagreeing with one another or disputing together (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse very effectively shows how untenable and impossible is the position of a polytheist. He is like a person who has to serve many masters, having interests mutually antagonistic and who also are ill-tempered and quarrelsome. Pitiable indeed is the lot of such a person! Can he be like a true believer who has to serve and please only one Master—God?

- R.4 33. ^aWho, then, is more unjust than he who lies against Allah and *he who* rejects the truth when it comes to him? Is there not in Hell an abode for the disbelievers?³⁴⁵⁷

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَّبَ
بِالصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. But he who has brought the truth, and *he who* testifies to it *as truth* — these it is who are the righteous.³⁴⁵⁸

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. ^bThey will have with their Lord whatever they desire; that is the reward of those who do good.

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ جَزَاُ
الْحَسَنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. ^cSo that Allah will remove from them the evil consequences of what they did, and will give them their reward according to the best of their actions.³⁴⁵⁹

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ
أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

^a6 : 22; 10 : 18; 29 : 69.

^b16 : 32; 50 : 36.

^c16 : 98; 29 : 8.

3457. Commentary :

After having briefly referred, in the foregoing verses, to the need and purpose of revelation, the *Sūra* proceeds to give two very sound and effective arguments in support of that phenomenon. The verse under comment deals with the first argument, which is, that two persons never succeed in life; the one who invents lies against God and the other who denies and rejects the truth when it is presented and preached to him. The second argument is given in the next verse.

3458. Commentary :

The second argument to support and estab-

lish the truth of a claimant to Divine revelation lies in the fact that the Prophets of God and those who accept their Message and follow their lead invariably meet with success, because they enjoy God's protection and help. These two criteria, the one mentioned in this and the other in the previous verse, determine the truth of a Divine Messenger.

3459. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that God covers up lapses, if any, of believers, and protects them against their evil consequences, while He rewards their good actions, of whatever degree or measure, as He would reward their best actions.

37. Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? And yet they would frighten thee with those beside Him. ^aAnd he whom Allah adjudges astray—for him there is no guide.³⁴⁶⁰

38. ^bAnd he whom Allah guides—there is none to lead him astray. Is not Allah the Mighty, the Lord of retribution?³⁴⁶¹

39. ^cAnd if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say, 'Allah'. Say, 'What think ye, if Allah intends to do me harm, will those whom you call upon beside Allah be able to remove His harm. Or if He wills to show me mercy, could they withhold His mercy?' ^dSay, 'Allah is sufficient for me. In Him trust those who would trust.'³⁴⁶²

40. Say, 'O my people, 'act as *best* you can; I *too* am acting; soon shall you know,'³⁴⁶³

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ^{٣٤٦٠}

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ
اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ^{٣٤٦١}

وَلَيْنِ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ
ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِيَ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَتُ رَحْمَتِهِ
قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ^{٣٤٦٢}
قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ^{٣٤٦٣}

^aSee 39 : 24. ^b18 : 18. ^c29 : 62; 31 : 26; 44 : 8. ^d9 : 129. ^e6 : 136; 11 : 122.

3460. Commentary :

The verse reinforces and enlarges the argument given in vv. 33, 34 above, viz., that all the schemes and machinations of disbelievers cannot cause the Prophets any real harm. This forms another proof of the fact that God is at their back and His help and succour alone is sufficient for them and that the threats of disbelievers cannot intimidate them into giving up their mission.

3461. Commentary :

Another fact which is writ large on the history of all religions is that those unfortunate people who incur Divine wrath by their persistent

opposition to God's Messengers never go unpunished.

3462. Commentary :

The verse means to say that though idolaters, out of superstition or traditional attachment to false gods, worship such gods, yet if the argument is driven home to them, they have to, and invariably do, confess that God is the Creator of heavens and earth and in Him alone resides all real power.

3463. Important Words :

مكانتكم (as you can). مكانة is considered by some to have been derived from كان which

41. ^aWho it is unto whom comes a punishment that will disgrace him, and on whom there descends an abiding punishment.³⁴⁶⁴

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

42. Verily, We have revealed to thee the Book with truth for *the good of mankind*. ^bSo whoever follows guidance, *follows it* for the benefit of his own soul; and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to its detriment. And thou art not a guardian over them.³⁴⁶⁵

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّٰ فَإِنَّا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَ مَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

^a11 : 40. ^b10 : 109; 17 : 16; 27 : 93.

means, he or it was, or it came into existence. Thus it means, place of existence; state or condition. It may also be taken to have been derived from مكن. They say مكن عند الأمير i.e. he had a great position with the prince. In this sense of the root word مكانة would mean, greatness; high rank or standing; honourable place or position; power. The expression اعملوا على مكانتكم would thus mean, do what you can; do your worst" (Lane & Aqrab).

The verse throws out an open challenge to disbelievers to do their worst and use all their power, resources and influence to destroy Islam but they will never succeed in their evil designs. Islam is humanity's last hope and final destiny and, therefore, its cause is bound to triumph and prevail.

3464. **Commentary :**

The verse mentions two kinds of punishment which is in store for rejectors of truth. عذاب يخزيه (punishment that will disgrace him) denotes the punishment in the form of ignominy and humiliation to which they will be subjected in this life and عذاب مقيم (abiding punishment) is the punishment of the next life which will be of much longer duration. Almost everywhere in the Qur'ān the word خزي denotes disgrace and humiliation in this world. See 2 : 86, 115; 5 : 34, 42; 11 : 67; 22 : 10; 41 : 17; etc.

3465. **Commentary :**

This verse like many other verses of the Qur'ān shows that man himself is the architect of his destiny—good or bad.

- 5 43. "Allah takes away the souls of human beings at the time of their death; and of those *also* that are not *yet* dead, during their sleep. And then He retains those against which He has decreed death, and sends *back* the others till an appointed term. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect."³⁴⁶⁶

44. ^bHave they taken intercessors beside Allah? Say, 'Even if they have no power over anything and no understanding?'³⁴⁶⁷

45. Say, 'All intercession *rests* with Allah. To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And to Him then shall you be brought back.'³⁴⁶⁸

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ
فِي مَنَامِهَا فِيمِنْكُمْ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ
وَيُرْسِلُ الْآخَرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

أَمَّا تَخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا
لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

^a6 : 61.

^b17 : 57.

3466. Commentary :

It appears from this verse that the soul of man is taken away both at the time of death and in sleep. In the former case, it is kept back and not allowed to return, while in the latter case, it comes back. The verse thus shows that the dead never come back to life. It also has an implied reference to the immortality of the human soul and man's accountability for his deeds. In v. 41 above it was stated that as a result of the rejection of Divine Message, the disbelievers will suffer disgrace and humiliation in this life and will be subjected to an abiding punishment in the life to come. In the present verse we are told that with his death, man's soul does not die or disintegrate but is taken away from its mortal habitat and is kept in other

regions to account for man's actions in due course.

3467. Commentary :

As the human soul is immortal, man is warned against committing deeds which might vitiate it and which are displeasing to God. The most heinous of all evil deeds is the setting up of equals with Him and the adoring of false gods.

3468. Commentary :

The verse refutes the false plea of idolaters that they worship their self-devised deities because they believe that they will intercede for them with the Almighty God and will bring them near to Him (39 : 4). "All intercession rests with Allah," says the verse, and "who is he that will intercede with Him except by His permission?" (2 : 256). See also 2 : 49.

46. ^aAnd when Allah alone is mentioned the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter shrink with aversion; but when those beside Him are mentioned, behold! they begin to rejoice.³⁴⁶⁹

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. ^bSay, 'O Allah! Originator of the heavens and the earth; Knower of the unseen and the seen; Thou *alone* wilt judge between Thy servants concerning that in which they differed.'³⁴⁷⁰

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عِلْمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. ^cAnd even if the wrongdoers possessed all that is in the earth, and the like thereof in addition to it, they would surely *seek to ransom* themselves with it *to escape* from the evil punishment on the Day of Resurrection; but there shall appear unto them, from Allah that which they never thought of.³⁴⁷¹

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَاقْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a17 : 47; 22 : 73; 40 : 13.

^b6 : 15; 12 : 102; 14 : 11; 35 : 2.

^c5 : 37; 10 : 55; 13 : 19.

3469. Important Words :

اشْمَأَزَّتْ (shrink with aversion) is derived from شَمَزَ. They say شَمَزَتْ نَفْسِي مِنْهُ i.e. my soul shrank from it in dislike, aversion or hatred. اشْمَأَزَّ means, he shrank or shuddered or was frightened. اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ means, their hearts become contracted and shrink with aversion (Lane).

3470. Commentary :

In the preceding verse reference was made to Divine Unity. The present verse mentions those attributes that are inseparably linked with Divine Unity. These attributes are that God is the sole Originator and Creator of the heavens and the earth and that He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen.

3471. Commentary :

The expression "Day of Resurrection" in the verse may apply both to the last Judgment Day and the day of the final triumph of Islam. That great event took place before the very eyes of disbelievers, when idolatry departed from Arabia never to return. The disbelievers could never conceive of such an event taking place. This may be the significance of the words, *but there shall appear unto them from Allah that which they never thought*. Or the words may mean that evil consequences of the evil deeds which disbelievers did in this life will appear before them in an embodied form in the life to come, and of that eventuality they had no idea.

49. ^aAnd the evil *consequences* of what they had earned will become apparent to them and that which they used to mock at will encompass them.

50. ^bAnd when harm touches man, he cries unto Us. But when We bestow on him a favour from Us, he says, 'This has been given to me on account of *my own* knowledge.' Nay, it is only a trial; but most of them know not.³⁴⁷²

51. Those who were before them said the same thing, yet all that they had earned availed them not;³⁴⁷³

52. So the evil *consequences* of what they had earned overtook them; and those who do wrong from among these *disbelievers*—the evil *consequences* of what they earned shall also overtake them. They cannot escape.

53. Know they not that 'Allah enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases, and straitens *it* for whomsoever He pleases? Verily, in that are Signs for a people who believe.'³⁴⁷⁴

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا
كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ
نِعْمَةً مِّمَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهَا عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَدَلُ
هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّا أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

قَدْ قَالُوا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا
كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ
هُؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا لَهُمْ لِيُخْجِرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

^a21 : 42; 45 : 34.

^bSee 39 : 9.

^c13 : 27; 29 : 63; 30 : 38; 34 : 37; 42 : 13.

3472. Commentary :

It is human nature that when man is involved in trouble he prays to God, but when he is in affluent circumstances he consigns Him to oblivion and attributes all his success in life to his own ability and knowledge. This attitude of conceit and arrogance has always proved a stumbling block in the way of disbelievers to appreciate and accept truth.

3473. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the attitude of conceit and self-praise to which reference has

been made in the previous verse has also proved the undoing of many a people in the past.

3474. Commentary :

The verse sums up the theme of the foregoing verses, *viz.*, that God has decreed that a people who are poor and weak should now become powerful and prosperous by following the Holy Prophet, and those who are rich and powerful should suffer disgrace and degradation because they have rejected the truth. When this happens it will constitute a great Sign to prove the truth of the Holy Prophet.

54. Say, "O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives all sins. Verily, He is Most Forgiving, Merciful,"³⁴⁷⁵

55. "And turn ye to your Lord, and submit yourselves to Him, before there comes unto you the punishment; for then you shall not be helped."³⁴⁷⁶

56. "And follow the best Teaching that has been revealed to you from your Lord, before the punishment comes upon you suddenly, while you perceive not,"³⁴⁷⁷

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰۤى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا
مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا

اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَ اَنِیْبُوْا اِلٰی رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ یَّاتِیْکُمُ

الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَ اتَّبِعُوْا اَحْسَنَ مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْکُمْ مِنْ رَّبِّکُمْ مِنْ

قَبْلِ اَنْ یَّاتِیْکُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّ اَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾

412 : 88; 15 : 57.

3475. Commentary :

The present is one of the most beautiful verses of the Qur'ān. It holds out a message of hope and good cheer to those who have wronged their souls. It encourages optimism and kills despair and despondency. It denounces and condemns pessimism because pessimism lies at the root of most sins and failures in life. Again and again the Qur'an gives a promise of Divine mercy and forgiveness. "Despair not of the mercy of Allah," it says, "for none despair of Allah's mercy save the disbelieving people" (12 : 88). Again it says: "And who can despair of the mercy of his Lord save those who go astray" (15 : 57). There could be no greater message of solace and comfort for the grieved and the heavy-laden than this. The God of Islam is "Most Forgiving, full of mercy" (18 : 59). "He has taken it upon Himself to show mercy" (6 : 55). "His mercy encompasses all things" (7 : 157). Such is the God of Islam. He can and does forgive the sins of His servants and does not need the vicarious sacrifice of anyone for

this purpose. He only requires a change of heart on the part of the sinner. According to Islam, the sinner is never beyond redemption. The Holy Prophet has beautifully explained this verse in one of his sayings, viz., *من قال هلك الناس فهو أهلكهم*, i.e. "He who says that the people have gone to ruin, it is he who, in fact, leads them to ruin" (Muslim).

3476. Commentary :

Whereas the preceding verse holds out to sinners the message of hope and good cheer, the verse under comment warns them that they will themselves have to work out their destiny by submitting to Divine laws. God's mercy comes only to those who obey His laws.

3477. Commentary :

This verse continues the theme of the preceding one. Man has first to make himself deserving of Divine mercy by following the best Teaching that has been revealed—the Qur'ān—and only then to demand it. It is honest endeavour that is demanded of men and the rest is made up by God's mercy.

57. "Lest a soul should say, 'O my grief for my remissness in my duty in respect of Allah! Surely, I was among those who scoffed;'

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَحْسَرْتِي عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جُنُبِ
اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لِمِنَ الشَّاعِرِينَ ٥٧

58. "Or lest it should say, 'If Allah had guided me, I should certainly have been among the righteous;'

أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هَدَانِي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ٥٨

59. "Or lest it should say, when it sees the punishment, 'Would that there were for me a return to the world, I would then be among those who do good!'" 3478

أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي كَرَّةً فَأَكُونَ
مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٥٩

60. God will answer, 'Aye, there came to thee My Signs, but thou didst treat them as lies, and thou wast arrogant, and thou wast of the disbelievers.' 3479

بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَكَ آيَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ
وَكَنتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ٦٠

61. And on the Day of Resurrection, thou wilt see those who lied against Allah with their faces blackened. Is there not in Hell an abode for the proud? 3480

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُم
مُّسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ٦١

a2 : 168; 6 : 32.

b6 : 28; 23 : 100; 26 : 103; 35 : 38.

c3 : 107; 10 : 28.

3478. Commentary :

The present and the previous two verses describe the state of a disbeliever when by his persistent evil deeds he incurs Divine displeasure, and punishment stares him in the face.

3479. Commentary :

The verse means to say that many chances are given to the man who is steeped in sin to repent and reform himself. It is when his rejection of truth is deliberate and repeated, and he exceeds all legitimate bounds in committing sin and transgression and when the day of reckoning actually

arrives, that his sighs and regrets prove of no avail to him.

3480. Commentary :

Whiteness of face is symbolic of happiness while blackness is a token of sorrow and grief (16 : 59; 80 : 39, 40). When a person does a good deed for which he is praised the Arabs say of him ابيض وجهه فلان i.e. the face of such a one has become white. And when he does a deed for which he is reproached and rebuked, it is said of him اسود وجهه i.e. his face has become black. The verse means to say that the day of reckoning will be a day of regrets and sorrow for the disbelievers.

62. ^aAnd Allah will deliver the righteous *and will lead them to a place of security and success*; evil shall not touch them, nor shall they grieve.

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ
الشُّوْءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. ^qAllah is the Creator of all things, and He is Guardian over all things.

اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. ^eTo Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth; and as for those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, these it is who are the losers.³⁴⁸¹

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

7 65. ^dSay, 'Is it other *gods* than Allah that you bid me worship, O ye ingorant ones?'³⁴⁸²

قُلْ أَغَيَّرَ اللَّهُ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. And verily it has been revealed to thee as unto those before thee: "If thou associate partners *with God*, thy work shall surely be in vain and thou shalt certainly be of the losers."³⁴⁸³

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ
أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. Aye, worship Allah and be among the thankful.³⁴⁸⁴

بَلِ اللَّهِ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

^a19 : 73; 21 : 102.

^b6 : 103; 13 : 17.

^e42 : 13.

^d6 : 15.

^e6 : 89.

3481. Commentary :

The verse means to say that as God is the Creator of everything and is the sole Possessor of the treasures of heavens and earth, so by rejecting His Prophet the disbelievers can do no harm to the cause of truth; on the contrary, by doing so, they bring about their own spiritual death.

3482. Commentary :

With this verse the *Sūra* returns to the subject of Divine Unity with which it had opened and

purports to say that it is the height of ignorance and folly to worship false deities.

3483. Commentary :

The verse is of general application, and stresses the futility and stupidity of polytheistic beliefs and idolatrous practices.

3484. Commentary :

The right use of God-given powers and faculties which is the true significance of شكر (thankfulness), consists in giving our undivided devotion to the Divine Being to Whom alone it is due.

68. ^aAnd they do not esteem Allah with the esteem that is due to Him. ^bAnd the whole earth will be *but* His handful on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand. Glory be to Him and exalted is He above that which they associate *with Him*.³⁴⁸⁵

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّى قَدَرَهُ ۖ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا
بِضُئْتِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ
سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

69. ^aAnd the trumpet will be blown, and *all* who are in the heavens and *all* who are in the earth will *fall down in a swoon*, except those whom Allah will please *to exempt*. Then will it be blown a second time, and lo! they will be standing, awaiting *judgment*.³⁴⁸⁶

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى
فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

70. And the earth will shine with the light of her Lord, ^dand the *Book* will be laid *open before them*, and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought, and judgment will be given between them with justice, and they will not be wronged.³⁴⁸⁷

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَ
جَاءَ بِالتَّبِيبِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

^a6 : 92; 22 : 75. ^b21 : 105. ^c18 : 100; 23 : 102; 36 : 52; 50 : 21; 69 : 14. ^d18 : 50.

3485. Commentary :

The word يَمِين signifying power and strength, the verse refers to the great power and majesty of God and purports to say that nothing is more derogatory to His great attributes than that idols, made of wood and stone, or weak human beings, should be worshipped.

3486. Commentary :

The verse seems to apply to Resurrection in the next life. But it may also apply to the spiritual condition of people immediately before the appearance of a Divine Teacher in the world whose advent is here likened to the blowing of the trumpet. In view of this simile "falling down into a swoon" may signify spiritual torpor of the people immediately before the appearance of a Divine Reformer and the

words "will be standing, awaiting" may signify their having seen and followed the right path after he has made his appearance.

3487. Commentary :

Applied to the next life, the words, "and the earth will shine with the light of her Lord," would mean that the veil will be lifted from the mysteries of life and the consequences of good or bad actions which man will have done in this life and which remain hidden here, will become manifest. With reference, however, to the appearance of a Divine Teacher in the world, particularly to that of the Holy Prophet, they may signify that now that the Holy Prophet has appeared the whole earth will shine with Divine Light, and spiritual darkness will be

71. "And every soul will be fully rewarded for what it did. And He knows full well what they do.

- R. 8 72. ^bAnd those who disbelieve will be driven to Hell in troops until, when they reach it, its gates will be opened, "and its Keepers will say to them: 'Did not Messengers from among yourselves come to you, reciting unto you the Signs of your Lord, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?' They will say, 'Yea, but the sentence of punishment has become justly due against the disbelievers.'³⁴⁸⁸

73. It will be said, ^d"Enter ye the gates of Hell, abiding therein. And evil is the abode of the arrogant."

74. And those who feared their Lord will be conducted to Heaven in groups until, when they reach it, and its gates are opened, and its Keepers say to them, "Peace be upon you! be ye happy, and enter it abiding *therein*."³⁴⁸⁹

وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَسَيَقُ الِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُرَّجًا ۖ فَيُكَلِّمُهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ قٰلَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا اَلَمْ يٰٓاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰیٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنْذِرُوْكُمْ لِقَآءِ يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا قَالُوْا بَلٰٓءَ لٰكِن كَذٰبٌ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾

قِيْلَ اَدْخُلُوْا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا فَاَنْفُسٌ مُّشَوِّىَةٌ اَلْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾

ۚ سَيَقُ الِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُرَّجًا ۖ حَتّٰٓىٰ اِذَا جَآءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

^a2 : 282; 3 : 26. ^b19 : 87. ^c6 : 131; 40 : 51; 67 : 9-10. ^d16 : 30; 40 : 77. ^e13 : 25.

completely dispelled. "The bringing of the Prophets" may signify the advent of the Holy Prophet who represents all the Prophets and Divine Teachers; and the word "witnesses" refers to his followers who enjoy the proud privilege of having been appointed witnesses over all men (2 : 144).

3488. Commentary :

This and the next few verses deal with the end and destiny of both believers and disbelievers. The disbelievers end by burning in the fire of

frustration, failure and regrets in this world, and in the fire of Hell in the next world.

3489. Commentary :

The righteous and the God-fearing will have success, honour and prosperity bestowed upon them in this life, and they will make unceasing spiritual progress and will bask for ever in the sun of Divine pleasure and bliss in the life to come.

The word طِبْتُمْ may also mean, because you led good and pure lives.

75. And they will say, ^a“All praise belongs to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to us, and has given us the earth to inherit, making our abode in the Garden wherever we please.” How excellent then is the reward of the *righteous* workers!³⁴⁹⁰

76. And thou wilt see the angels ^bgoing round the Throne, glorifying their Lord with *His* praise. Judgment will be given between them with justice. And it will be said: ‘All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.’³⁴⁹¹

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا
الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ
أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِّينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

^a1 : 2; 7 : 44: 37 : 183. ^b40 : 8; 69 : 18.

3490. Commentary :

When believers see the promises of success and prosperity, made to them by the Prophet of God in the hour of severe tribulation, being literally fulfilled, their hearts become full of gratitude and they sing Divine praises from the inmost depths of their being. The words “the earth” in the sentence “and has given us the earth to inherit” may refer to the Holy Land, and the verse may particularly apply to the Holy Prophet’s Companions who had to wait for only a few years to see the fulfilment of the promise that the Holy Land would fall into their possession. The Muslims conquered Palestine in the caliphate of ‘Umar and it remained in their hands for more than 1300 years with the exception of a brief period of about 90 years. The present possession of Palestine by the Jews seems to be only a temporary phase.

3491. Commentary :

God’s attributes will see their most complete manifestation on the Judgment Day and the cherubs will be on duty singing alleluias to the Divine Being. ‘The angels’ in the verse may also refer to the Companions of the Holy

Prophet who seeing God’s promises being fulfilled before their very eyes sang praises to Divine glory, majesty and holiness as no people had ever done before, and never was judgment made so clear between right and wrong as was made in the time of the Holy Prophet. This seems to be the significance of the verse.

The word عرش (Throne), for which see 10 : 4, represents the transcendent attributes of God such as His glory, majesty, holiness and power. These attributes have an intimate connection with Unity, as is clear from 23 : 117, where we read : *There is no God but He, the Lord of the Exalted Throne*, for it is the transcendent attributes of God which constitute the real proof of His Unity, as His other attributes are shared by man. In this sense of the word عرش (Throne), the verse would mean that the Unity of God will become established in Arabia, and God’s true servants in the world together with the angels in heavens, will celebrate His praises.

The words, “Thou wilt see the angels going round the Throne,” may mean that angels will sing God’s praises continuously and in unison.

CHAPTER 40

AL-MU'MIN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

With this Chapter begins a group of *Sūras*, all of which have the same abbreviated letters, viz., م م م (Hā Mīm) affixed to them and which open with the subject of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Being similar in style and contents they belong to the same period. According to Ibn-'Abbās and 'Ikramah, they were revealed at Mecca at a time when opposition to Islam had become persistent, organized and bitter (vv. 56 & 78) and the Holy Prophet's enemies were even seeking to kill him (v. 29).

The *Sūra* seems to derive its title from v. 29 where a "believing man" from among the people of Pharaoh is represented as giving a speech, full of pathos and sound reasoning, in support of Moses. The *Sūra* is also known as Ghāfir after the Divine attribute غافر *i.e.* the Forgiver of sins (v. 4). It has 86 verses including *Bismillah*.

Towards the close of the last *Sūra*, the Holy Prophet was comforted with the assurance that very soon Divine judgment will issue forth between him and his enemies. The forces of darkness will be routed; idolatry will disappear from Arabia, and the whole country will reverberate with the praises of God, the Lord of all the worlds Who has not confined His guidance to any one particular people, but has blessed all with it. The present *Sūra* opens with the most welcome declaration that the Great and Mighty God has revealed the Qur'ān to preach truth to all nations of the world, and that God's majesty and holiness demand that righteousness should be established in the world and disbelief obliterated from it.

Subject-Matter

As mentioned above, the *Sūra* opens with a firm declaration that the time has come when truth will triumph over falsehood and righteousness over evil, and the praises of God will be sung in the land where idolatry had been rampant. This great consummation will be brought about by means of the Qur'ān. The enemies of truth will strain every nerve to retard the progress of Islam and will put all sorts of obstacles in the way of its propagation and expansion. They will also use their influence and powerful resources to nip its tender plant in the bud. But they will fail in their evil designs and endeavours. The Holy Prophet is told not to be deceived and overawed by the glamour of power and great material resources of disbelievers. They are destined to come to a sad end. The Holy Prophet is further told that his opponents are not the only people to oppose truth. There

have been before them people who also sought to kill their Prophets and exterminate their missions. But God's punishment overtook them. So will punishment of God seize disbelievers of the Holy Prophet. And when punishment came upon them, they will curse themselves and vainly seek a way out of their dreadful predicament. But they will suffer the consequences of their evil deeds and of opposition to truth, because they have ignored the lesson of history and have not profited by the fate of opponents of Prophets of past generations.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to refer to the case of Moses as an illustration of the sad end to which the opponents of the Holy Prophet are bound to come. Moses was sent to Pharaoh, Hāmān and Korah with the Divine Message; they sought to take his life. But they were foiled in their wicked designs. While Pharaoh rejected Moses's invitation to truth, a "believing man" from his own household gave a most pathetic but convincing speech, exhorting his people not to seek to kill a man (Moses) whose only fault was that he said that Allah was his Lord, and who possessed sound and solid proofs to support and establish his case. The "believing man" told his people that if they did not cease opposing Moses, they would meet with the sad fate which the people of Noah and Ād and Thamūd tribes had met. He further warned them that they should not be misled by their wealth, power and material resources, for all these things were transitory and, that it was the Hereafter which was the place of permanent stay and where the good and the righteous will be provided with blessings that will know no end. The *Sūra* further states that instead of benefiting by the very sincere advice of the "believing man," Pharaoh mocked and jeered at him and wanted, as it were, to go up to heaven to have a peep, as he sarcastically and jeeringly said, at the God of Moses. But the God of Moses made him see a manifestation of His great power in the depths of the deep sea. He was cursed in this life, and on the Day of Resurrection he will enter the fire of Hell at the head of his people. This is the end of those who, in the pride of their wealth and prestige, reject the Message of God.

After having given a brief description of the evil end of Pharaoh and that of the opponents of other Prophets of God, the *Sūra* makes pointed reference to an invariable Divine law, *viz.*, that help and succour of God is and will always be with His Messengers and with their followers and that failure and frustration will continue to dog the footsteps of disbelievers till the end of time. This Divine law operated in the time of every Prophet and it will see its fullest demonstration in the time of the Holy Prophet. The Prophet is then enjoined to bear with patience the opposition and ridicule of his opponents and to pray to God for removal of all obstacles from his way. He is further comforted that the "Hour" was fast approaching when forces of darkness would be finally vanquished. The "Hour" is as certain as anything but most men would not believe in the "Hour" unless they actually felt its impact, but then the door of repentance would be closed upon them and they would burn in the fire of frustration, ignominy and disgrace.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that disbelievers have no reason to reject the Holy Prophet. His advent is not a novel phenomenon. Just as day follows night in the physical world, so does spiritual awakening follow a period of moral decadence in the spiritual realm. As the world had become

spiritually dead, God has raised the Holy Prophet to give it new life through the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Prophet's own noble example, and a dead community now will regain a new and vigorous spiritual life. The living God Who created man from mere dust will bring about this consummation. But if disbelievers persisted in denying and opposing truth they will bring wrath of God upon their heads. Allah's decree is sure to come and no one can stop it.

The *Sūra* ends on the note that when God has made a dequate provision for the physical needs of man, He could not have ignored to make similar provision for his spiritual needs. He has made this provision from time immemorial. He sent His Messengers and Prophets in the world who invited men to their Lord and Creator; but out of ingratitude and folly the sons of darkness rejected the Divine Message in every age, with the inevitable result that they earned God's displeasure and merited punishment.

سُورَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٠)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³⁴⁹²

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^ḤHa Mīm.³⁴⁹³

حَمِّ ②

3. "The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing,"³⁴⁹⁴

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ③

4. Forgiver of sin, Acceptor of repentance, Severe in punishment, Lord of bounty. There is no God but He. Towards Him is the final return.³⁴⁹⁵

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ
ذِي الطُّولِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ④

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b41 : 2; 42 : 2; 43 : 2; 44 : 2; 45 : 2; 46 : 2. ^c20 : 5; 32 : 3; 41 : 3;
45 : 3; 46 : 3.

3492. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3493. Commentary :

For a full explanation of abbreviated letters see 2 : 2 and 19 : 2. In the present *Sūra* the abbreviated letters حم stand for the Divine attributes حميد مجيد i.e. the Praiseworthy, and the Lord of Honour, or for حي قيوم i.e. the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Both these groups of Divine attributes have a strong bearing on the subject-matter of this *Sūra*. The *Sūra* makes repeated reference to the glory, majesty and power of God as the word عرش which signifies these attributes and which has been twice mentioned in the first few verses, shows. The second main theme of the *Sūra* is the rise of a spiritually dead people to new life. Both the attributes حي (Living) and قيوم (Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining) have an obvious connection with this subject. This fact explains why the abbreviated letters حم

have been placed in the beginning. It is worthy of particular note that the present and next six *Sūras* form a special group. Each of them opens with the abbreviated letters حم which indicates that a deep connection exists between their subject-matter.

3494. Commentary :

The two Divine attributes, viz., the Almighty and the All-Knowing, have also a far-reaching and deep connection with the subject-matter of the *Sūra* as the following pages will show.

3495. Important Words :

الطول (bounty) is derived from طال which means, it was or became elongated, extended, long, tall or high. طول (ṭaul) means, beneficence and bounty and a gift; excellence; excess or super-abundance; power or ability; wealth or competence; ampleness of circumstances; superiority, ascendancy. طول (ṭūl) means, length; extension, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

5. ^aNone disputes about the Signs of Allah except those who disbelieve. ^bLet not, then, their going about in the land deceive thee.³⁴⁹⁶

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرُكَ
تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْأَلْأَادِ ⑤

6. ^cBefore them the people of Noah and other groups after them rejected *Our Signs* and every nation strove to seize their Messenger, and disputed by means of false *arguments* that they might rebut the truth thereby. Then I seized them, and how *terrible* was My retribution!³⁴⁹⁷

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
وَهَبَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ رِسُولَهُمْ لِي أَخْذُوهُ وَجَدَلُوا
بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ عِقَابِ ⑥

7. ^dAnd thus was the word of thy Lord proved true against the disbelievers: that they are the inmates of the Fire.³⁴⁹⁸

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ⑦

^a22 : 4; 42 : 36. ^b3 : 197. ^c6 : 35; 22 : 43; 35 : 26; 54 : 10. ^d10 : 34, 97.

Commentary :

God as represented by Islam is Forgiver of sins, Acceptor of repentance, and Beneficent, but he who persists in wicked ways and does not reform or repent, to him He is very severe in punishment.

3496. Commentary :

The verse warns believers not to be deceived by the glamour of the dazzling material power and progress of disbelievers, as it is bound to fall into decay in the long run.

3497. Commentary :

The verse gives an illustration of the great power and wealth which disbelievers, in the time of Noah and the Prophets who came after him, possessed. Just as disbelievers were seized with Divine punishment because they rejected and opposed their Prophets, so will the enemies of the Holy Prophet be punished.

3498. Commentary :

The verse means to say that by their own perversity and persistent rejection of truth, and by their opposition to God's Prophets, the disbelievers fully merit Divine punishment.

8. "Those who bear the Throne, and those who are around it, glorify their Lord with *His* praise, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe, *saying*: 'Our Lord, Thou dost comprehend all things in *Thy* mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow *Thy* way; and protect them from the punishment of Hell.³⁴⁹⁹

9. 'Our Lord, and admit them to the Gardens of Eternity which Thou hast promised them, as well as ^bsuch of their fathers and their wives and their children as are virtuous. Surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.³⁵⁰⁰

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ⑧

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ⑨

^a39 : 76; 69 : 18.

^b13 : 24; 52 : 22.

3499. Commentary :

As عرش (Throne) signifies Divine attributes (see 10 : 4 & 39 : 76), "the bearers of the Throne" would, therefore, mean those beings or persons through whom those attributes are manifested. The laws of nature work through the angels, and the Prophets are the instruments through whom God's Word is preached to mankind. Thus the words "those who bear the Throne" may signify both the angels and Divine Messengers. The four principal Divine attributes being رب (the Lord), الرحمن (the Gracious), الرحيم (the Merciful) and مالك يوم الدين (Master of the Day of Judgment), the most important bearers of the Throne are those angels through whom these four attributes find their manifestation and expression; and the words "those who are around it" may signify subordinate angels who assist the principal angels in executing the affairs of the world.

God's attributes of 'mercy' and 'knowledge,' according to this verse, are among the most important and all-comprehensive of Divine attributes.

Asking of forgiveness by angels for believers consists in the fact that they help the believers in preaching the Word of God and spreading righteousness on earth.

3500. Commentary :

The verse lays down a great and good principle. No work is accomplished and no success achieved by anyone in this world single-handed. Several other persons, consciously or unconsciously, make their contribution to it. These conscious or unconscious associates and helpers generally are those who are connected nearly with him, *i.e.* his parents, wife and children. So these near relatives of a believer will also be allowed to participate in the blessings that will be bestowed

10. 'And protect them from evils; and he whom Thou dost protect from evils on that day—him hast Thou surely shown mercy. And that *indeed* is the supreme triumph.'³⁵⁰¹

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ
فَقَدْ رَجِحْتَهُ ۖ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

R. 2 11. Those who disbelieve will be told, 'Greater was the abhorrence of Allah when you were called to the faith and you disbelieved than your abhorrence of yourselves *today*.'³⁵⁰²

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ لَبَقْتُ اللَّهَ أَكْبَرُ
مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ
فَتَكْفُرُونَ ۝

12. They will say, 'Our Lord,^bThou hast caused us to die twice, and Thou hast given us life twice, and now we confess our sins. Is then there a way out?'³⁵⁰³

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ
فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِّنْ
سَبِيلٍ ۝

^a6 : 17. ^b30 : 41.

upon him as a reward for the contribution they had made in helping him to preach the cause of truth.

3501. Commentary :

There could be no greater success in life than that a person should get the best reward for all his good actions and be saved from the evil consequences of his lapses. This is what true believers receive in this world and will receive in the life to come.

3502. Commentary :

It is human nature that when a person is confronted with the evil consequences of his

bad deeds, he begins to curse himself. It is to this aspect of the nature of man that reference is made in this verse. The disbelievers are told that when they are face to face with punishment they feel disgusted with themselves. But they should know that the Merciful and Gracious God was more disgusted with them when they rejected His Message and opposed and persecuted His Messengers.

3503. Commentary :

The state before birth is a sort of death and the end of this life is the second death. The birth and the Resurrection are the two lives.

13. *It will be said to them, 'This is because, ^awhen Allah alone was called upon, you disbelieved, but when partners were associated with Him, you believed. The decision now belongs only to Allah, the High, the Incomparably Great.'*³⁵⁰⁴

ذِكْرُ بَآئِهِ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ
وَإِنْ تُشْرِكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ
الْكَبِيرِ ⑬

14. ^bHe it is Who shows you His Signs and sends down provision for you from heaven; but none pays heed save he who turns to God.³⁵⁰⁵

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ سَرَقًا وَمَا تَدْرُكُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ ⑭

15. Call ye then on Allah, ^cbeing sincere to Him in religion, though the disbelievers may be averse to it.

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ ⑮

16. *He is of most exalted attributes, Lord of the Throne. ^dHe sends the Word by His command to whomsoever of His servants He pleases, that He may give warning of the Day of Meeting.*³⁵⁰⁶

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ
التَّلَاقِ ⑯

^a22 : 73; 39 : 46.

^b13 : 13; 30 : 25.

^c29 : 66; 31 : 33; 98 : 6.

^d16 : 3; 97 : 5.

3504. Commentary :

The basic doctrine of Islam, in fact of all religions, is the Unity of God. It is the pivot round which all other religious principles and teachings revolve. The Qur'ān has laid the greatest stress on this doctrine. Second in importance to this doctrine is belief in life after death.

3505. Commentary :

All sustenance, spiritual as well as physical, descends from heaven. Water, upon which all life depends (21 : 31), comes down from it and so does revelation upon which man's spiritual and moral life depends.

3506. Commentary :

In this verse God has been described as ذوالعرش which literally meaning, Possessor or Owner of the Throne," has been translated as Lord of the Throne for want of a better word. Elsewhere (23 : 87, 117) God has been described as رب العرش i.e. Lord of the Throne. عرش (Throne) as mentioned above (v. 8) signifies Divine attributes. The construction ذوالعرش (Lord of the Throne) is like ذو الرحمة i.e. Lord of mercy (18 : 59) and thus refutes the popular wrong notion that عرش is something physical. For الروح (Word) see 4 : 172 and 16 : 3.

17. The day when they will *all* come forth; ^anothing concerning them will be hidden from Allah. ^bWhose is the kingdom this day? *It is Allah's, the One, the Most Supreme.*³⁵⁰⁷

18. ^cThis day will every soul be requited for that which it has earned. No injustice this day! Surely, Allah is Swift at reckoning.

19. ^dAnd warn them of the Day *that is fast approaching*, when the hearts will reach to the throats *while they will be full of suppressed grief*. The wrongdoers will have no warm friend, nor any intercessor whose *intercession* will be accepted.³⁵⁰⁸

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَرْزُونَ ۚ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ
شَيْءٌ ۚ لَسَ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ۝١٧

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۖ لَا ظُلْمَ
الْيَوْمَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝١٨

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأَزْفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى
الْحَنَاجِرِ كَظِيمِينَ ۚ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَیْمٍ
وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ ۝١٩

^a3 : 6; 14 : 39.

^b18 : 45; 48 : 15; 82 : 20.

^c14 : 52; 45 : 23; 74 : 39.

^d19 : 40.

3507. Commentary :

The verse signifies that disbelievers will be brought face to face with the evil consequences of their wicked deeds on the Day of Reckoning. These deeds were never hidden from God but on the Day of Judgment they will appear in an embodied form before the eyes of the disbelievers themselves. The words "this day" may signify the Last Judgment Day, or the hour of reckoning of disbelievers in this very life. This hour of reckoning came upon the disbelieving Quraish on the day of the Fall of Mecca when the realization dawned upon them that "the kingdom was Allah's—the One, the Most Supreme."

3508. Important Words :

كَظِيمِينَ (full of suppressed grief) is the plural of كَظِيمٌ which is active participle from كَظَمَ. They

say كَظَمَ الْبَابَ *i.e.* he shut the door. كَظَمَ الْقَرَبَةَ means, he filled the skin-bag and closed its mouth. كَظَمَ غَيْظَهُ means, he restrained his wrath or rage. كَظَمَ أَوْ كَظِيمٌ means, full of grief or one who restrains or suppresses his wrath (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words "the fast approaching day" besides referring to the Day of Judgment may quite fittingly be applied to the day in this life when falsehood is vanquished and truth triumphs. They may also refer, as already mentioned, to the day when Mecca fell and the forces of evil were finally and irretrievably routed in Arabia and disbelievers could not even give vent to their grief that was eating into their hearts.

20. "He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal."³⁵⁰⁹

21. And Allah judges with truth, ^bbut those on whom they call beside Him cannot judge at all. Surely, Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

3 22. "Have they not travelled in the earth and seen what was the end of those before them? They were mightier than these in power and *in* marks *they left* in the earth. But Allah seized them for their sins, and they had no protector against Allah."³⁵¹⁰

23. That was because ^dtheir Messengers came to them with manifest Signs, but they disbelieved; so Allah seized them. Surely, He is Powerful, Severe in punishment.

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ ۝

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ

الْبَصِيرُ ۝

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ ۝

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

^a27 : 75; 28 : 70. ^b13 : 15; 35 : 14. ^c12 : 110; 22 : 47; 35 : 45; 47 : 11. ^d23 : 45; 41 : 15.

3509. Important Words :

خائنة (treachery) is derived from خان which means, he was unfaithful or he acted unfaithfully to the trust or confidence reposed in him. It is an intensive epithet like علامة (very learned man) and is also the feminine gender of خائن which means, an unfaithful, treacherous and perfidious person. خوان (khawwān) and خائنة both mean, very unfaithful, treacherous and perfidious. خائنة الأعين means, a surreptitious look at a thing which it is not allowable to look at, or looking intentionally at a thing which it is not permissible to see *i.e.*, treachery of the eyes (Lane).

3510. Important Words :

وقى (protector) is derived from وقى. They say وقى فلاناً *i.e.* he preserved or guarded such a one from trouble. وقاه الله عن السوء means, may God protect him from evil. وقى الأمر means, he set the affair right. واق means, one who protects, a protector (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse warns disbelievers that rejection of truth has never borne good fruit and that the opponents of God's Prophets have always met with a sad end. This is one supreme lesson of all history.

24. "And We did send Moses, with Our Signs and manifest authority,"³⁵¹¹

25. Unto Pharaoh and Hāman and Korah; but they said, 'He is a lying sorcerer'.³⁵¹²

26. "And when he came to them with truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who have believed with him, and let their women live.' But the design of the disbelievers is bound to fail."³⁵¹³

27. And Pharaoh said: 'Leave me alone that I may kill Moses; and let him call on his Lord. ^aI fear lest he should change your religion or cause disorder to raise its head in the land.'³⁵¹⁴

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سِحْرٌ كَذَّابٌ ۝

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ

الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ۝

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ

رَبَّهُ ۚ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ

فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ۝

^a23 : 46.

^b28 : 77; 29 : 40.

^c10 : 77.

^d7 : 128; 20 : 64; 26 : 36.

3511. Commentary :

A notable instance of the fact that opposition to truth has always landed the opposers into ruin is that of the opponents of Moses—the great counterpart of the Holy Prophet.

3512. Commentary :

For Korah and Hāmān see 28 : 7; 77. Every Prophet of God had had his Pharaoh, Hāmān and Korah. These names respectively may symbolise political power, priesthood and material wealth, as Hāmān was the head of priestly class, and Korah an extremely rich man among Pharaoh's nobles. Unlimited political power, servile priesthood and uncontrolled capitalism are the three evils which have ever retarded and arrested the political, economic, moral and spiritual growth of a people, and naturally it is against these enemies of man that Heavenly Reformers have

waged relentless war in every age.

3513. Commentary :

Pharaoh, his ministers and people sought to wipe out the entire manhood of Israel by killing their men and taking into forcible marriage their women. That indeed constituted a most wicked design against Israel on Pharaoh's part. But the design failed miserably. So would the Holy Prophet's opponents, the verse signifies, fail in their wicked designs against him.

3514. Commentary :

In the pride of his material wealth and power Pharaoh challenges Moses to call upon his God to save him, if He can, from his clutches, as he is determined to exterminate him and his mission. The words, "Leave me alone that I may kill Moses," mean, "I am determined to kill Moses and will accept no advice to spare his life."

28. And Moses said, "I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant *person* who believes not in the Day of Reckoning."³⁵¹⁵

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ۝٣٥

4 29. And a believing man from among the people of Pharaoh, who kept hidden his faith, said, "Will you slay a man because he says, 'My Lord is Allah,' while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? ^bAnd if he be a liar, on him will be *the sin of his lie*; but if he is truthful, then some of that which he threatens you with will *surely* befall you. Certainly, Allah guides not one who exceeds the bounds and is a great liar."³⁵¹⁶

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۖ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ۝٣٦

^a44 : 21-22.

^b69 : 45, 47.

3515. Commentary :

God is the last refuge of the Prophets and the Elect. They knock at His door when they see darkness all around them and when the powers of evil are determined to exterminate truth preached by them.

3516. Commentary :

It seems that under the influence of Pharaoh's wife who was a very righteous woman (66 : 12) some other members of his household had also believed in Moses and the "believing man"

might have been one of them. The good man kept his faith concealed in order to give expression to it on a suitable occasion. The bold manner in which he expressed his belief and spoke to the people of Pharaoh shows that the concealment was not due to fear.

The verse also embodies an infallible criterion to test the truth of the claim of a Divine Reformer; viz., that (1) a forger of lies is never allowed to grow and prosper and that (2) the opponents of a Divine Reformer do not go unpunished.

30. "O my people, yours is the sovereignty this day, you being dominant in the land. But who will help us *and protect us* from the punishment of Allah if it comes upon us?" Pharaoh said: 'I only point out to you that which I see myself, and I guide you only to the path of rectitude.'³⁵¹⁷

يَقُومُ لَكُمْ الْمَلِكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَهَرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَنَنْتَصِرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا قَالُ
فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ
إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ③٠

31. And he who believed said: "O my people, I fear for you the like of the day of *destruction* of the parties,³⁵¹⁸

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَقُومُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ قِتْلَ
يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ③١

32. "The like of the case of the people of Noah, and 'Ad and Thamūd and those after them. And Allah intends no injustice to *His* servants."³⁵¹⁹

مِثْلَ دَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ ③٢

49 : 70; 14 : 10; 50 : 13-15.

3517. Commentary :

The "believing man" warns the people of Pharaoh that their wealth and sovereignty should not delude them into a false sense of security and complacency because if they opposed Moses, Divine punishment would seize them. The verse also shows that power, prestige and wealth constitute the greatest obstacles in the way of truth being accepted by disbelievers.

3518. Important Words :

يوم (day) of which the plural is ايام means, time absolutely; day from sunrise to sunset; present time; now, etc. (1 : 4). ايام العرب means, the contests and fights of the Arabs. ابن الايام means, a person who is well-acquainted with the conditions and circumstances of the time. ايام الله

means, the favours and punishments of God (Aqrab). See also 1 : 4 and 14 : 6.

احزاب (parties) is the plural of حزب which means, a party or company of men and here signifies the parties who opposed the Prophets of God in their respective times. "The day of the parties" signifies the day when they met their doom.

3519. Important Words :

دأب (case) is the noun-infinitive from دأب (da'ba). They say دأب في العمل i.e. he laboured and strove hard and exerted and wearied himself in the work; he remained constant in it. دأب (da'bun) means, working hard and constantly; habit, custom or manner; case, affair or condition (Aqrab). See also 3 : 12.

33. "And O my people, I fear for you the day of calling one another for help,"³⁵²⁰

34. "A day when you shall turn your backs fleeing. No defender shall you have against Allah. And for him whom Allah adjudges astray, there shall be no guide.

35. "And Joseph did come to you before with clear proofs, but you ceased not to be in doubt concerning that with which he came to you till, when he died, you said. 'Allah will never raise a Messenger after him.' Thus does Allah adjudge as lost those who transgress, and are doubters—³⁵²¹

36. "Those who dispute concerning the Signs of Allah without any authority having come to them from Allah. Grievously hateful is this in the sight of Allah and in the sight of those who believe. Thus does Allah set a seal upon the heart of every arrogant, haughty person,"

وَيَقُومُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ۝

يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ

عَاصِمٍ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا

زَلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ

لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ

اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٍ ۝

إِلَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ

كَبْرٌ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ

يُطَبِّعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ۝

72 : 13 ; 14. : 7

3520. Important Words :

التناد (calling one another) is derived from نادى. They say نادى الرجل *i.e.* he called the man loudly or he sat with him in the assembly. تنادى القوم means, the people called one another. يوم التناد means, the day of mutual calling, the day of calling one another for help *i.e.* the day of distress. تناد (tanādda) may be taken to have been derived from ناد (nadda). ناد الابل means, the camel took fright and fled or ran away or ran at random. تناد القوم (tanādda) means, the people dispersed; or hated and opposed and separated. According to this root-meaning of the word the expression, يوم التناد

يوم التناد (tanād) being synonymous with التناد (tanādd)—one دال having been omitted,—means the day when people will take fright and disperse in different directions; or when they will hate and oppose each other and will become separated (Aqrab).

3521. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that Prophets have been coming in the world from time immemorial but men are so constituted that whenever a Prophet came they rejected and opposed him and when he died they said that no more Prophets would come and that the door of revelation was shut for ever. This attitude of disbelievers has led to the rejection of every Prophet.

37. And Pharaoh said: 'O Hāmān, build thou for me a lofty tower that I may attain to the means of access—³⁵²²

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَهَامُنُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّي
أَبْلُغَ الْأَسْبَابَ^{٣٧}

38. 'The means of access to the heavens, ^bso that I may have a look at the God of Moses, and I surely think him to be a liar.' And thus the evil of his doing was made *to look* fair in the eyes of Pharaoh, and he was turned away from the *right* path; and the design of Pharaoh *ended* but in ruin.³⁵²³

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلَعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي
لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ
وَصَدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي
تَبَابٍ^{٣٨}

R. 5 39. And he who believed said: 'O my people, follow me. I will guide you to the path of rectitude.³⁵²⁴

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَأْتِئُكُمْ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ
الرَّشَادِ^{٣٩}

40. 'O my people, ^cthis life of the world is but a *temporary* provision; and the Hereafter is certainly the permanent abode.

يَقُومُ إِنَّا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ
هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ^{٤٠}

^a28 : 39.

^b28 : 39.

^c3 : 15, 198; 9 : 38; 16 : 118; 28 : 61.

3522. Commentary :

Puffed up with power, wealth and great material resources, Pharaoh insolently mocked and jeered at Moses because he said that he had been sent by the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Pharaoh wanted, as it were, to go up to heaven to have a peep, as he mockingly said, at Moses's God, but God made him see a manifestation of His power in the depths of the sea.

3523. Commentary :

The verse means to say that all the evil designs of Pharaoh against Moses recoiled on his own head and ended only in his own ruin.

3524. Commentary :

The speech of the "believing man" shows that true believers are fully convinced of the righteousness of their cause. It is this rock-like faith which enables them to suffer all sorts of hardship and privations gladly.

41. ^aWhoso does evil will be requited only with the like of it; ^bbut whoso does good, whether male or female, and is a believer—these will enter the Garden; they will be provided therein without measure.³⁵²⁵

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۝٣١

42. 'And O my people, how *strange* it is that I call you to salvation, and you call me to Fire.³⁵²⁶

وَيَقُولُ مَا لِيَ أَدْعُوكُمُ إِلَى التَّجْوَةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ ۝٣٢

43. 'You invite me to disbelieve in Allah, and to associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, while I invite you to the Mighty, the Great Forgiver.³⁵²⁷

تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۖ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمُ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ ۝٣٣

44. 'Surely, that to which you call me has no *title* to be called upon in this world or in the Hereafter; and that our return is certainly to Allah and that the transgressors will be the inmates of the Fire.

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَّرَدُّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ السُّرِّفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۝٣٤

^a10 : 28;

^b4 : 125.

3525. Commentary :

The verse shows that whereas the requital of the evil deeds of disbelievers is proportionate to their deeds, the reward of the good deeds of believers is without limit or measure. This is the Islamic conception of Heaven and Hell, and what a beautiful concept it is !

3526. Commentary :

It is worthy of note that while according to other religions, the highest goal of man is *نَجَاة* i.e. deliverance from sin and its evil consequences, the goal according to Islam is

فلاح (23 : 2) which is attainment of the noble and supreme object for which man has been created and which consists in winning God's pleasure. Thus the stage of *فلاح* (attainment of one's object) is clearly much higher in man's spiritual development than that of *نَجَاة*.

3527. Commentary :

Whereas, as stated above in v. 42, the believers have an invincible faith in the truth of their cause, the disbelievers grope in the darkness of doubt and lack of knowledge. All disbelief springs from ignorance and superstition.

45. 'So you will soon remember what I say to you. And I entrust my cause to Allah. Verily, Allah sees *all His servants.*'

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفِوضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٥﴾

46. *The result was that Allah preserved him from the evils of whatever they plotted, and a grievous punishment encompassed the people of Pharaoh—*³⁵²⁸

فَوَقَّاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. The Fire. They are exposed to it morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour is come, *it will be said:* 'Cast Pharaoh's people into the severest punishment.'³⁵²⁹

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ
تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ
الْعَذَابِ ﴿٣٧﴾

48. 'And when they will dispute with one another in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were proud, 'Verily, we were your followers; *b*will you then relieve us of a portion of the punishment of the Fire?'

وَإِذْ يَتَحَايَوْنَ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُ الضَّعِيفُ الَّذِينَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ
عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٣٨﴾

49. 'Those who were proud, will say: 'Now we are all in it. Allah has already judged between *His servants.*'

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ
حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a7 : 39; 14 : 22; 28 : 64; 33 : 68; 34 : 32.

^b14 : 22; 29 : 13. ^c7 : 40; 33 : 69; 34 : 33.

3528. Commentary :

It seems that the people of Pharaoh had hatched a plot to kill the "believing man" or do him some other grievous injury. Not only did the plot itself fall through but a terrible punishment also encompassed the plotters.

3529. Commentary :

The implied reference in the words, "they are

exposed to it morning and evening," may be to the punishment the disbelievers are made to suffer in *برزخ*,—which is an intervening stage, and where the realization of pain or joy is incomplete. The complete and full manifestation of Heaven and Hell will take place on the Day of Judgment.

50. And those in the Fire will say to the Keepers of Hell, 'Pray to your Lord that He ^amay lighten for us the punishment for a day'.³⁵³⁰

51. They will say: ^b'Did not your Messengers come to you with manifest Signs?' They will say: 'Yea.' *The Keepers* will say, 'Then pray on.' ^c'But the prayer of disbelievers is of no avail'.³⁵³¹

6 52. ^dMost surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe, *both* in the present life and on the day when the witnesses will stand forth,³⁵³²

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ۝٥٠

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمُ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَالُوا فَأَدْعُوا ۚ وَمَا دُعَاؤُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي

ضَلَالٍ ۝٥١

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ۝٥٢

^a6 : 28; 23 : 108. ^b6 : 131; 39 : 72; 67 : 9-10. ^c13 : 15. ^d10 : 104; 30 : 48; 58 : 22.

3530. Commentary :

The word يوم meaning time absolutely; a day or part of a day (Lane), the verse purports to say that disbelievers will implore the Keepers of Hell to intercede with God on their behalf that He may lighten their punishment—it may be, for a little while.

3531. Commentary :

The verse signifies that the efforts of disbelievers against God's Prophets always prove futile and abortive, not that their prayers are not accepted. God does answer the prayers of a distressed person when he calls upon Him whether he be a believer or disbeliever (27 : 63). The verse only means that it is the prayers of disbelievers against the Prophets of God that go in vain.

3532. Commentary :

The verse embodies a message of hope and

good cheer for believers. It holds out an emphatic promise to Divine Messengers and their followers that God's help and succour will always be with them and that, try as they might, the evil designs of disbelievers against them are bound to fail. The truth of this Divine promise has been demonstrated again and again in the history of revealed religions, and it saw its fullest manifestation in the time of the Greatest of all Prophets and Divine Messengers—the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The Day of Judgment has been called here "the day when the witnesses will stand forth," because that will be a day of witnesses *par excellence*. On that day the Prophets shall bear witness (39 : 70); the angels will also be present to witness the Divine Judgment (83 : 22) and even the tongues and eyes and hands of disbelievers will bear witness against the guilty (24 : 25 and 41 : 21-22).

53. The day when their excuses will not profit the wrongdoers, and ^atheirs will be the curse and theirs the evil abode.³⁵³³

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذَرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ السُّوءُ الدَّارُ ۝٥٣

54. ^bAnd indeed We gave Moses the guidance, and made the Children of Israel heirs to the Book—

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْكِتَابَ ۝٥٤

55. A guidance and a reminder for men of understanding.

هُدًى وَذِكْرٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝٥٥

56. ^cSo have patience. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. And ask forgiveness for thy frailty, and glorify thy Lord with His praise in the evening and in the morning.³⁵³⁴

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِدُنُوبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ۝٥٦

^a13 : 26.

^b2 : 88; 17 : 3; 23 : 50; 32 : 24.

^c30 : 61.

3533. Commentary :

In the presence of such infallible witnesses as have been referred to in the preceding verse, no excuse, plea or defence on the part of wrongdoers will be of any avail to them.

3534. Important Words :

غفر (ask forgiveness) is derived from غفر (ask forgiveness) is derived from غفر. They say غفر الشيء i.e. he covered or concealed the thing. غفر الله ذنبه means, God covered up his sins and forgave him. مغفرة and غفران, which are both infinitives, signify God's forgiveness or His protection of a person against the punishment of his sins and protection against future lapses (Mufradāt, Aqrab & Lane). استغفر would thus signify, "ask God for مغفرة" i.e. covering up of, and forgiveness for, past lapses, and protection from future stumbling. استغفار (Istighfār), therefore, is not only needed by ordinary believers but also by holy men of God—even by God's great Prophets. While the former

offer Istighfār to seek protection against future sins as well as from the evil consequences of past lapses, the latter seek protection from human shortcomings and weaknesses that may hinder the progress of their cause. The Prophets also are human and though they are immune to sin, yet they, too, are heir to human failings and frailties and so they too need offering Istighfār to seek Divine help and assistance against these. See also 2 : 59 & 14 : 42

ذنب (frailty) is derived from ذنب (dhanaba). ذنبه (dhanaba-hū) means, he followed his tail, not quitting his track. ذنب, therefore signifies such natural failings or frailties as adhere to human nature. ذنب also means a fault, an imperfection, a shortcoming, natural weakness, frailty, a misdeed, an offence or error for which one is liable to be called to account or which produces harmful results (Mufradāt). Four words i.e. جناح, جرم, إثم and

ذنب (all signifying a lapse) have been used in the Qur'ān, but whereas all the four have been used in relation to human beings generally, the first three have not been used with regard to Prophets of God. This shows the great difference between ذنب and other words. See also 3 : 17.

Commentary :

As against the Bible which has imputed all sorts of heinous crimes and sins to God's Prophets (Gen. 9 : 21-22; 19 : 30-36 & II Sam. 11 : 2-5), Islam regards them as completely free from all moral lapses. They are born sinless and they remain sinless throughout life. "They are God's honoured servants and fully carry out His commandments" (21 : 21,28). Christian writers have vainly sought to infer from 48 : 3 and from the verse under comment that as the Holy Prophet was enjoined to ask forgiveness for his ذنب, he must have been guilty of moral lapses. Apart from the fact that a casual study of the context at both the places belies this baseless inference, the argument only exposes ignorance of Arabic idiom on the part of Christian critics. استغفر لذنبك is quite a harmless expression, particularly when used about a Prophet of God; and in view of the meanings of the words ذنب and استغفار, as given under "Important Words" above, it does not at all bear this sinister construction. The expression only means that the Holy Prophet was enjoined to invoke God's protection against his human weaknesses standing in the way of the realization of his noble object which was the advance and spread of Islam and the complete and final

victory of truth over falsehood. The expression may also mean, "ask forgiveness for them (thine enemies) for the wrongs they have done thee," ذنبك meaning, the wrong done to thee. The Qur'ān regards the Holy Prophet, as indeed all other Divine Messengers, as above any imputation of committing a sin. The Qur'ān has shed some light on the very high moral stature of the Holy Prophet. It says :

- (1) He it is who has raised among the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom (2 : 130 ; 3 : 165 & 62 : 3).
- (2) Your Companion has neither erred, nor has he gone astray. Nor does he speak out of his own desire. It is nothing but pure revelation that has been revealed by God (53 : 3-5).
- (3) Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to God (48 : 11).
- (4) Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me: Then Allah will love you and forgive you your faults (3₁ : 32).
- (5) Whoso obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah indeed (4 : 81).

It is ignorance of Arabic language or misrepresentation of the text of the Qur'ān to say that it regards the great and noble Prophet, who had raised to the highest pinnacles of spiritual glory a whole people, sunk deep in the depths of moral turpitude, and had purified them, liable to commit sins!

57. "Those who dispute concerning the Signs of Allah without any authority having come to them—there is nothing in their breasts but a *feeling of greatness* which they will never attain. So seek refuge in Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.^{3534A}

58. Certainly, the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind; but most men know not.³⁵³⁵

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ
أَتَهُمْ إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرًا هُمْ بِبِالْغِيَةِ
فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٥٧﴾

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

^aSee 40 : 36.

3534A. Commentary :

كِبْر may signify, besides the meaning given in the text, pride; desire to become great; great designs.

3535. Commentary :

The verse drives home the supreme lesson that false pride has led many a people to their moral undoing. What is man, it purports to say, as compared to the vast universe, that he should refuse to accept the Word of God Who is its sole Creator. The implication of the verse may also be that when God could create heaven and earth, He could also bring man to life after death.

The verse possesses yet another significance. According to learned scholars and Commentators, such as Baghvi, Ibn Hajar and others, the word الناس (mankind) in the verse signifies the

Dajjāl. This interpretation finds its confirmation in a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, viz :

ما بين خالق آدم الى قيام الساعة خالق أكبر من الدجال
i.e. from the creation of Adam to the Day of Resurrection there has not been a greater creation than that of the *Dajjāl* (Bukhārī). This ḥadīth points to the mightiness and all-powerfulness of the *Dajjāl*; and as he is a great deceiver and beguiler, the Faithful are warned to be on their guard against being deceived or intimidated by his apparent glamour and material glory. In view of this ḥadīth the implication of the verse seems to be that the forces of darkness, of which the *Dajjāl* is the greatest representative, however mighty and powerful they may be, will fail to retard the progress of Islam, and that such forces will eventually be vanquished by the new Faith.

59. ^aAnd the blind and the seeing are not equal; neither are those who believe and do good deeds *equal* to those who do evil. Little do you reflect.³⁵³⁶

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرَةُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. ^bThe Hour will surely come; there is no doubt about it; yet most men believe not.³⁵³⁷

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. ^cAnd your Lord says: 'Pray unto Me; I will answer your *prayer*. But those who are too proud to worship Me will surely enter Hell, despised.'³⁵³⁸

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَٰخِرِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

7 62. ^dIt is Allah Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein, and the day to *enable you* to see. Verily, Allah is Bountiful to mankind, yet most men are ungrateful.³⁵³⁹

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهَا وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصَرًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

^a13 : 17; 35 : 20; 39 : 10.

^b15 : 86; 20 : 16.

^c2 : 187; 6 : 42; 25 : 78; 27 : 63.

^d17 : 13; 36 : 38; 41 : 38.

3536. Commentary :

The verse means to say that those who accept the truth and do good deeds are not like those who do evil deeds, because the former are gifted with spiritual sight while the latter are deprived of it; and the seeing and the blind can never be equal.

3537. Commentary :

This verse reinforces the argument given in the previous verse and means to say that the "Hour" of the ultimate vanquishment of the forces of darkness and the triumph of Islam is fast approaching. It is as certain as anything, but most men are so constituted

that they would not believe in the "Hour" unless they actually feel its impact.

3538. Important Words :

داخرين (despised) is the plural of داخر which is derived from دخر which means, he was or became abject, mean, contemptible or despicable. داخر therefore means, abject, mean, despicable, etc. (Lane).

3539. Commentary :

Night is the time of rest and day that of work. In the life of a people, however, 'night' represents the period of moral stagnation when they remain in a state of spiritual torpor, while 'day' represents the time when a Divine

63. "Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things. There is no God but He. How then are you turned away?³⁵⁴⁰

ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ خَالِقِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Thus indeed are turned away those who deny the Signs of Allah.

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَحَدُّونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Allah is He Who has made for you the earth a resting-place, and the heaven a canopy, and has shaped you and made your shapes perfect, and has provided you with good things. Such is Allah, your Lord. So blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.³⁵⁴¹

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ
بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَسَرَّزَكُمْ
مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾
رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. He is the Living God. There is no God but He. "So pray unto Him, being sincere to Him in religion. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

^a6 : 103. ^b7 : 12; 23 : 15; 39 : 7; 64:4. ^c2 : 173; 23 : 5. ^d39 : 12; 98 : 6.

Reformer has made his appearance among them. Thus the people of the Holy Prophet are told that with the rising of the spiritual Sun—the Holy Prophet—the time of their ignorance and torpor has passed. They should, therefore, shake off their lethargy and languor and, making use of its light, should bring about a change in their condition.

3540. Commentary :

In continuation of the theme of the preceding verse, the present verse purports to say that when God has created all the things wanted

by men to satisfy their physical needs and requirements, He could not have neglected to make similar provision for their spiritual needs. In order to satisfy their spiritual needs, He has sent the Holy Prophet. They should therefore accept him and be not turned away from God.

3541. Commentary :

The theme dealt with in vv. 62 and 63 above has been treated in a different form in the present verse. The inference derived, however, is the same.

67. ^aSay, 'I have been forbidden^c to worship those whom you call upon beside Allah since there have come clear proofs unto me from my Lord; and I have been commanded to submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.'³⁵⁴²

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِلرَّبِّ الْعَلِيِّنَ ۝١٧

68. ^bHe it is Who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clot; then He brings you forth as a child; then *He lets you grow* that you may attain your full strength; then that you become old—*though* some among you are caused to die before—and that you may reach a term appointed, and that you may learn wisdom.³⁵⁴³

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝١٨

69. ^cHe it is Who gives life and causes death. ^dAnd when He decrees a thing, He says to it only, 'Be!' and it is.³⁵⁴⁴

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۝١٩

^a6 : 57 ; 39 : 65. ^b18 : 38; 22-6; 23 : 14; 35 : 12; 36 : 78. ^c2 : 29; 22 : 67; 30 : 41.
^d2 : 118; 3 : 48; 16 : 41; 36 : 83.

3542. Commentary :

The verse means to say that when God is the sole Creator of heavens and earth and it is He Who has created man and has made full provision for all his physical and spiritual needs, it is inconsistent with reason and highly presumptuous on the part of man to worship any being or thing in preference to Him, "the Lord of all the worlds."

3543. Commentary :

For a full explanation of this verse see vv.

22 : 6 and 23 : 13-16.

3544. Commentary :

It is the will and decree of God, Who gives life and causes death, that a people—the Arabs—who were morally and spiritually as good as dead, should now rise to a new life through the Holy Prophet; and none can thwart and frustrate His decree.

The word *كن* (be) does not here denote command; but expresses a desire or wish. For significance of this word see 19 : 36.

- 8 70. "Hast thou not seen those who dispute concerning the Signs of Allah? How they are being turned away from the truth!"³⁵⁴⁵

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنَّهُمْ يُصْرِفُونَ^{٤٣}

71. Those who reject the Book and that with which We sent Our Messengers. But soon will they come to know,

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ^{٤٤}

72. When the iron-collars are round their necks, and chains too. And they are dragged³⁵⁴⁶

إِذَا الْأَغْلالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلْسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ^{٤٥}

73. "Into boiling water; then in the Fire they are burnt."³⁵⁴⁷

فِي الْحَيْمَةِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ^{٤٦}

74. Then it is said to them, 'Where are those whom you associated with God

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ^{٤٧}

75. 'Beside Allah?' They will say, 'They have vanished away from us. Nay, we never prayed to anything beside Allah before.' Thus will Allah confound the disbelievers.

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ^{٤٨}

^a13 : 14; 22 : 9; 31 : 21.

^b36 : 9; 76 : 5.

^c10 : 5; 55 : 45; 78 : 26. ^d41 : 49.

3545. Commentary :

This and the following six verses warn disbelievers that they should not hurriedly reject the Holy Prophet because the denial of truth has never produced good results and the rejectors have always suffered the evil consequences of their rejection.

3546. Important Words :

يُسْحَبُونَ (dragged) is derived from سَحَبَ . They say سَحَبَهُ i.e. he dragged or drew him or it along. سَحَاب (clouds) are so called perhaps

because they are dragged along by the winds (Lane).

3547. Important Words :

يُسْجَرُونَ (they are burnt) is derived from سَجَرَ . They say سَجَرَ النَّارِ i.e. he filled the oven with firewood and made it hot. سَجَرَ الْمَاءِ النَّهْرِ means, the water filled the streamlet. سَجَرَ الْبَحَارِ means, when the seas shall be filled or when they shall overflow or when they shall be set on fire (Lane). See also 81 : 7.

76. 'That is because you exulted in the earth without justification, and because you behaved insolently.

ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ
الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

77. "Enter ye the gates of Hell, to abide therein. And evil is the abode of the arrogant.'

أَدْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبئسَ
مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

78. Then be thou patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is bound to be fulfilled. ^bAnd whether We show thee part of what We have promised them or whether We cause thee to die *before the fulfilment of Our promise*, to Us in any case will they be brought back.³⁵⁴⁸

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ
الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

79. And We did send Messengers before thee; ^cof them are some whom We have mentioned to thee, and of them are some whom We have not mentioned to thee; ^dand it is not possible for any Messenger to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allah. But when Allah's decree comes, the matter is decided with truth, and then there perish those who utter falsehoods.³⁵⁴⁹

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا
عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ
لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

^a16 : 30; 39 : 73.

^b10 : 47; 13 : 41; 23 : 96; 43 : 43.

^c4 : 165. ^d13 : 39; 14 : 12.

3548. Commentary :

The verse refers to two vital principles: (1) Truth must prevail in the long run but before success comes to men of God, they have to go through severe trials and tribulations and their faith has to be tested and proved up to the mark. (2) Prophecies containing warnings of punishment to disbelievers are conditional and subject to postponement, revocation or cancellation. The word بعض (part) signifies that not all prophecies containing threats are literally fulfilled. They change with a change in the attitude of disbelievers. If disbelievers persist in deny-

ing and opposing truth they are punished, but if they accept truth, or if they give up opposition and reform themselves, such prophecies are revoked and cancelled.

3549. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that though the prophecies containing warnings and threats meant for disbelievers are subject to postponement, revocation or cancellation, yet, if by closing the door of repentance, the disbelievers make themselves deserving of Divine punishment they are punished. But it is not for the Prophet to say when and how they are to be punished.

٢. 9 80. ^aIt is Allah Who has made cattle for you, that you may ride on some of them, and eat *of the flesh* of some of them—³⁵⁵⁰

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۝

81. ^bAnd you *derive other* benefits from them—and that, by means of them, you may satisfy any desire *that may be* in your breasts. And on them and on ships are you borne.³⁵⁵¹

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَتُبْلَغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةٌ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ۝

82. And He shows you His Signs; which then of the Signs of Allah will you deny?

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَآيَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ ۝

^a6 : 143; 16 : 6; 23 : 22; 36 : 72-74.

^b16 : 6-8; 23 : 2 2-23; 36 : 73-74.

3550. Commentary :

This and the next two verses contain a great moral lesson for man in relation to cattle and other animals which God has created for his use. The lesson is that man is not the creator of these animals and yet he exercises control over them, whereas God has created man but he refuses to acknowledge God's control over him or the authority of His Messenger. The verse further seems to imply that when God has taken so much care to provide for the physical needs of man, He could not have ignored to make similar provision

for the needs of his soul which are much more important than those of the body.

3551. Important Words :

حاجة (desire) is derived from حاج which means, (1) he desired, sought or sought after; (2) he was or became poor or was in poverty, need or want; (3) he wanted, needed or required him or it. حاجة means, want, need, necessity, desire; a thing wanted, needed or required; an object of want or of need. ابن حاجة means, one who is constantly in want. قضى حاجته means, he accomplished his want, he did his business (Lane).

83. "Have they not travelled in the earth that they might see what was the end of those who were before them? They were more numerous than these, and mightier in power and *in the marks they left behind them* in the earth. But all that which they earned was of no avail to them.³⁵⁵²

84. And when their Messengers came to them with manifest Signs, they exulted in *the little* knowledge they possessed. And that at which they mocked encompassed them.

85. "And when they saw Our punishment, they said: 'We believe in Allah alone and we reject all that which we used to associate with Him.'

86. "But their faith could not profit them when they saw Our punishment. *This is Allah's law that has ever been in operation in respect of His servants.* And thus perished those who disbelieved.³⁵⁵³

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرُ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ
قُوَّةً وَأَثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَعْنَى عَنْهُمْ كَمَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ كَمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا
كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا
سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ
هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

^a16 : 37; 27 : 70; 30 : 43.

^b10 : 52, 91.

^c10 : 92.

3552. **Commentary :**

After having been reminded, in the last three verses, of the many Divine blessings and favours, the greatest of which is that God has revealed His will to mankind and has sent His Messengers to guide them, the disbelievers are warned in the present verse that if they refused to accept God's Message and opposed His Messenger,

they will be visited with Heavenly punishment as disbelievers were punished in the past.

3553. **Commentary :**

The verse means to say that when the cup of iniquities perpetrated by disbelievers becomes full, and the Divine decree that they should be punished comes into operation, no profession of faith on their part is of any avail, and repentance is too late.

CHAPTER 41

HĀ MĪM AL-SAJDAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Time of Revelation

The *Sūra* bears the title of Hā Mīm Al-Sajdah. It is also known as Fuṣṣilat. Being the second of the seven *Sūrās* of Hā Mīm group, it possesses a very close resemblance with the *Sūra* that goes before it and those that follow it, in style and subject-matter, and like them it was revealed at Mecca when the opposition to Islam grew strong, determined and persistent.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

Whereas towards the close of the preceding *Sūra* it was stated that when Divine punishment actually overtakes a people, belief and repentance are of no avail, as this is a fixed Divine law which has known no change or deviation, in the beginning of the present *Sūra* we are told that it is those people, who close the avenues of their hearts and persistently refuse to listen to the teaching of this Book which is full of wisdom and which has been revealed by the Gracious and Merciful God for their moral development and spiritual well-being, who render themselves deserving of Divine punishment, and that when punishment comes faith does not benefit such people.

Subject-Matter

As stated above, the *Sūra* opens with the declaration that Qur'ān is a Book which embodies all that is necessary for the moral and spiritual development of man, and that it explains fully and completely all its tenets, teachings and principles in a most explicit, expressive and intelligible language. Its main purpose is to give glad tidings to the righteous and honest believers and to warn those who reject and oppose truth and who give themselves up to evil deeds, that a dreadful punishment will overtake them if they persisted in their disbelief and evil ways. But disbelievers have always chosen to reject the Divine Message and to say mockingly that it was too good and sublime to be understood by them! To this taunt of disbelievers the Holy Prophet is enjoined to return the reply that being a human like them, his Message was quite simple and easily comprehensible. The *Sūra* then adduces as an argument the creation of the universe in six periods or stages to prove Divine Unity, and proceeds to say that all Prophets and Heavenly Messengers brought the self-same message of Divine Unity. Even the Prophets of antiquity like Hūd and Ṣāliḥ preached the same doctrine, but their people rejected them and behaved arrogantly towards them and consequently were destroyed. So, if the Meccans did not give up their opposition to truth and did not reform themselves, they too will meet with no better fate and will be hauled up before God's great Judgment Seat and their ears, eyes and skins will bear witness against them and their ultimate destination will be Hell.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to say that whenever a new Prophet comes in the world, the leaders of disbelief try to stifle the voice of truth by raising a hue and cry against it and seek to confuse people by using all sorts of guiles and subterfuges; but falsehood has never succeeded in drowning the voice of truth. Likewise, will the efforts of opponents of the Holy Prophet against him fail. The angels of God will descend upon those who believe in him and stand by him through thick and thin, consoling and comforting them, blessing their endeavours with success and telling them that they will inherit Divine blessings in this world and will be God's guests in the next.

Next, the *Sūra* says that the teaching of the Qur'ān will continue to advance by its own inherent qualities and strength. The votaries of darkness will try to put obstacles in its way but God will remove those obstacles and gradually truth will spread and the night of sin and iniquity will pass away and the sun of righteousness and God's Unity will begin to shine upon Arabia and a whole people, who for centuries had groped in the darkness of ignorance, will receive new life, and a bleak and barren land will bloom and blossom forth with green verdure all its own. This marvellous change will come about through the noble teachings of this wonderful Book—the Qur'ān, revealed by God, Who is Wise and Worthy of all praise.

Towards the close the *Sūra* makes a prophecy that Islam, after having been established in Arabia, will spread and expand to the farthest ends of the earth through the sincere and indefatigable efforts of the followers of Islam. God alone knows how and when the seed of truth that the Holy Prophet has sown in the soil of Arabia will develop and grow into a mighty tree, but grow it must and under its cool and comfortable shade great nations will take rest.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁵⁵⁴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bHā Mīm.^{3554A}

حَمْدٌ ②

3. "This is a revelation from the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁵⁵⁵

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ③

4. ^aA Book, the verses of which have been expounded in detail—the Qur'ān in clear, eloquent language—for a people who have knowledge,³⁵⁵⁶

كُتِبَ فَصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ④

5. "A bringer of glad tidings and a warner. But most of them turn away and they hear not.³⁵⁵⁷

بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ⑤

^a1 : 1. ^b40 : 2; 42 : 2; 44 : 2; 45 : 2; 46 : 2. ^c32 : 3; 36 : 6; 40 : 3; 45 : 3; 46 : 3.
^d11 : 2. ^e5 : 20; 25 : 27; 35 : 25; 48 : 3.

3554. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3554A. Commentary :

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters حم see 40 : 2.

3555. Commentary :

See 40 : 3.

3556. Important Words :

عَرَبِيًّا (clear, eloquent language) is derived from عرب ('ariba or 'aruba). The root meanings of this word denote fulness, abundance and plainness coupled with chasteness. Hence all the words formed from this root express the

idea of fulness, abundance and clearness. Thus the words قرآنا عربيا would mean, the Book which is most extensively and regularly read and which expresses its ideas and themes in a most clear, eloquent and comprehensive language. See also 12 : 3 & 20 : 114.

3557. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the most distinctive feature of this most perspicuous of all Divine Books is that it gives a message of hope and good cheer to those who accept and follow it and warns disbelievers that they would meet with a sad fate, if they persisted in disbelief.

6. "And they say : 'Our hearts are *secure* under coverings against that to which thou callest us, and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and thee there is a veil. So carry on thy work; we *too* are working.'³⁵⁵⁸

7. ^bSay, 'I am only a man like you. It is revealed to me that your God is One God; so go ye straight to Him *without deviating*, and ask forgiveness of Him.' And woe to the idolaters,³⁵⁵⁹

8. Who give not the Zakāt, and they it is who disbelieve in the Hereafter.³⁵⁶⁰

9. ^cAs to those who believe and do good works, for them surely is a reward that will never end.³⁵⁶¹

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِيْ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَا اِلَيْهِ
وَفِيْ اٰذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ
فَاعْمَلْ اِنَّا عَمِلُوْنَا ⑥

قُلْ اِنَّمَا اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحٰى اِلَىَّ اَنَّا اِلٰهُكُمْ
اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْا اِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ وَوَيْلٌ
لِّلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ⑦

الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ⑧

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرٌ
مَّمْنُوْنَ ⑨

^a6 : 26; 17 : 47; 18 : 58.

^b14 : 12; 18 : 111; 21 : 109.

^c11 : 12; 84 : 26; 95 : 7.

3558. Commentary :

The verse depicts disbelievers as saying ironically and sarcastically to the Holy Prophet, "your teaching is too good for us sinners to accept and your ideals too sublime to be understood and realized by us." If the words are taken to be spoken seriously they would mean: "We are fully determined not to accept your teaching. We have closed all the avenues of our hearts, eyes and ears against it."

3559. Commentary :

This verse answers the sarcasm of disbelievers referred to in the previous verse. The Holy Prophet is told to say to them that he is but a man like them and no god or angel. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not be able to

understand the Message of which the bearer is a human being and which is meant for human beings.

3560. Commentary :

The verse mentions two very prominent characteristics of disbelievers—they do not pay to the competent authorities, out of their hoarded wealth, the Zakāt which is due from them and do not believe in the accountability for their actions in the life to come.

3561. Important Words :

غير ممنون (that will never end) is derived from من (manna). They say من الرجل i.e. he weakened or tired out the man. من الحبل means, he cut off or tore off the rope. من الشيء means, he

R.2 10. Say: 'Do you really disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days? And do you set up equals to Him?' That is the Lord of the worlds.³⁵⁶²

قُلْ أَنتَ كُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي
يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا ذَلِكَ سَرَبُ
الْعَالَمِينَ ⑩

11. "He placed therein firm mountains rising above its *surface*, and blessed it *with abundance*, and provided therein its foods in proper measure in four days—alike for *all* seekers.³⁵⁶³

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا
وَقَدَرَفِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً
لِلنَّاسِ يَلِين ⑪

^a13 : 4; 15 : 20; 16 : 16; 77 : 28.

diminished the thing. من عليه means, he did a favour to him; ممتنون therefore means, obliged, diminished, broken or cut off; weak; strong, etc. (Aqrah).

3562. Commentary :

The word يوم (of which the dual is يومين) properly means, time absolutely (see 1 : 4; 10 : 4). It is in this sense that the word has been used in this and the next verse. It is not possible to surmise the length of these "two days." They may have extended over thousands of years. Even in the Qur'ān يوم (day) has been spoken of as equal to a thousand years (22:48) or even equal to fifty thousand years (70:5). So يوم (day) in this and the next verse does not denote the day as determined by the rising and setting of the sun. The word denotes time absolutely, or may signify an indefinite period or stage in the development of a thing.

The making of the earth in two days may signify the two stages through which the earth passed from a formless matter into a gradually evolved form after it had cooled down and become condensed.

3563. Important Words :

اقواتها (its foods) is the plural of قوت (qūt) which is derived from قات which means, he fed, nourished or sustained or fed with what would sustain the body. أقات على الشيء means, he had power or ability to do the thing. قاته means, he guarded or protected him. قوت means, provision, food, sustenance, etc. (Lane & Aqrah).

Commentary :

The "two days" or stages mentioned in the previous verse through which the earth had to pass before it assumed its present form are included in the number "four days" mentioned in the present verse; the additional "two days" signifying the two stages of the placing on it of mountains, rivers, etc., and the growth on of vegetable and animal life. See also verse 13 below.

The words, "provided its foods in proper measure," signify that the earth is fully capable of providing food for all the creatures that live on it.

12. Then He turned to the heaven while it was *like* smoke, and said to it and to the earth: 'Come ye both of you in obedience, willingly or unwillingly.' They said, 'We come willingly in obedience.'³⁵⁶⁴

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا
وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا
طَائِعِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

The expression "alike for all seekers" may signify that the foods which God has provided in the earth are equally accessible to all seekers who try to get them according to the laws of nature. It may mean also that all the physical needs and requirements of man have been adequately met in the foods that grow out of earth. So the fear that the earth may not some day be able to grow sufficient food for the fast increasing population of the world is groundless. The world can provide food, fibre and all other agricultural requirements for 28 billion people, ten times the world's present population (Professor Colin Clark, Director of the Agriculture Economics Research Institute of Oxford University). Only recently the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation pointed out in its report, "The State of Food and Agriculture, 1959," that the world's food supply grows twice as fast as its population.

3564. Important Words :

دخان (smoke) is infinitive-noun from دَخَنَ . They say دَخَنَتِ النَّارُ i.e. the fire sent up smoke. دخان means, smoke or gaseous matter ; evil

or mischief, dearth, drought, sterility; hunger (Lane & Aqrab).

كَرِهَ (unwillingly) is derived from كَرِهَ . They say كَرِهَ الشَّيْءَ (kariha) i.e. he did not desire, disapproved, disliked, hated or loathed the thing. أَكْرَهَهُ عَلَى الْأَمْرِ means, he compelled him to do the thing against his will. كَرِهًا (kurhan and karhan) in both forms is infinitive-noun from كَرِهَ , the former i.e. كَرِهًا (kurhan) meaning, what you yourself do not like and the latter (karhan) meaning, what you are compelled to do against your will by someone else. فَعَلَهُ كَرِهًا (karhan) means, he did it unwillingly (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 217.

Commentary :

The verse signifies that everything in the universe is subject to certain laws which it obeys and according to which it works. It has no discretion. It is man alone who has been endowed with volition or discretion to obey or defy the Divine laws and it is not unoften that he uses his discretion to his detriment. This is also the meaning and significance of 33 : 73.

13. So He completed them into seven heavens in two days, and He revealed to each heaven its function. ^aAnd We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps for light and provided it with the means of ^bprotection. That is the decree of the Mighty, the All-Knowing.³⁵⁶⁵

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَلَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ
فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا
بِبَصَائِعِ النَّجْمِ ۖ وَحِفْظًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ
الْعَلِيمِ ۝١٣

14. But if they turn away, then say: ^cI warn you of a destructive punishment like the punishment which overtook 'Ād and Thamūd.³⁵⁶⁶

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صِيعَةً مِّثْلَ
صِيعَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ ۝١٤

^a15 : 17; 37 : 7; 67 : 7.

^b15 : 18.

^c40 : 31-32.

3565. Commentary :

In vv. 10 and 11 above it is stated that the making of the earth took two days and the placing on it of the mountains, rivers, etc., and of vegetable and animal life, another two days. In the present verse, however, it is mentioned that like the earth the solar system with its planets and satellites also took two days to become complete. Thus the whole universe came into existence in six days or periods which is quite in harmony with vv. 7 : 55 and 50 : 39. Taking the word يوم in the sense of "stage," the three vv. 10, 11 and 13 taken together would mean that the whole physical universe was completed in six stages. After the creation of the universe, man was created, whose creation also was completed in six stages. See also 23 : 13-15.

3566. Commentary :

The purport of the verse seems to be that when the vast and orderly universe, of which

the earth forms but a small part, and the planets and satellites of which the universe is composed have been created for the service of man, it is inconceivable that man for whom everything was brought into existence, should have been created without a purpose. His life has a grim purpose and a great mission. He has been created to develop and manifest in himself, on human scale, Divine attributes in order to prove himself to be God's vicegerent on earth. To help him to achieve this supreme and noble object, God sent His Messengers. These Divine Messengers came to all peoples in different periods of time. Invariably they were rejected by their peoples and the rejectors met with a sad fate. The Holy Prophet is asked to warn his own people that if they rejected and opposed him, they, too, will meet with no better fate. The verse under comment cites the examples of 'Ād and Thamūd who by rejecting their Prophets incurred God's displeasure and punishment.

15. When their Messengers came to them from before them and from behind them, *saying*: "Worship none but Allah," they said: 'If our Lord had so willed, He would certainly have sent down angels. So we do disbelieve in that with which you have been sent.'³⁵⁶⁷

16. As for 'Ād, they behaved arrogantly in the earth without any justification and said, 'Who is mightier than we in power?' Do they not see that Allah, Who created them, is mightier than they in power? Still they continued to deny Our Signs.³⁵⁶⁸

17. So ^bWe sent upon them a furious wind for several ominous days, that We might make them taste the punishment of humiliation in this life. And the punishment of the Hereafter will surely be more humiliating, and they will not be helped.³⁵⁶⁹

إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمْ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً فَأَتَانَا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كُفْرًا ⑮

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ⑯

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِنَنْذِرَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْآخِرَةِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْثَرُ وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ⑰

^a2 : 84; 12 : 41; 17 : 24. ^b46 25.

3567. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the Prophets of God used all possible means to make their people accept the Divine Message and also warned them of Divine punishment if they rejected it.

3568. Commentary :

For a somewhat detailed account of 'Ād and Thamūd see 11 : 51 and 11 : 62.

3569. Important Words :

ريحا (wind) has been used in the Qur'ān in the sense of wind; good news; power and prestige. In the present verse it means, wind; in 12 : 95

it has been used in the sense of good news and in 8 : 47 it signifies power and prestige.

صرصرا (furious) is derived from صر . They say أصر على فعله i.e. he persisted in doing what he was doing; he determined, resolved or decided upon it. ريحا صرصرا means, a wind intensely cold or vehemently loud or roaring (Lane).

نحسات (ominous) is the plural of نحسة which is derived from نحس which means, he or it was or became unprosperous, unfortunate, inauspicious or unlucky. نحس (nahsun) means, ill-luck; great injury; cold wind; يوم نحس means, an inauspicious or cold day (Lane & Aqrab).

18. And as for Thamūd, We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness to guidance, so the calamity of a humiliating punishment seized them, on account of what they had earned.³⁵⁷⁰

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَى عَلَى
الْهُدَى فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ صَيعَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ^{١٨}

19. And We saved those who believed and acted righteously.

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ^{١٩}

R. 3 20. And on the day when "the enemies of Allah will be gathered together and driven to the Fire, and they will be divided into groups.³⁵⁷¹

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ
يُوزَعُونَ^{٢٠}

21. Till, when they reach it, ^btheir ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they had been doing³⁵⁷².

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَ
بُصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ^{٢١}

^a27 : 84. ^b7 : 37; 24 : 25; 36 : 66.

3570. Commentary :

The word عَمَى (blindness) has been used here in the sense of blindness of the heart or mind.

3571. Important Words :

يوزعون (will be divided into groups) is formed from وزع فلانا وزع i.e. he urged, goaded or incited such a one. وزع الجيش means, he kept back those in the army who were in front so that those who were behind should come up to them. An Arab would say : رأيته يزع الجيش i.e. I saw him forming the army into groups and stationing them in lines

for fighting (Aqrah).

3572. Commentary :

The ears and eyes of the guilty will bear witness against them in three ways: (a) The evil consequences of the actions of disbelievers will take physical form in the next world and thus will be quite apparent for anyone to see. (2) The very organs of the bodies of disbeliever having been vitiated by misuse, their vitiated condition will bear witness against them; and (3) the words uttered by them and all the movement of the organs of their bodies, having been preserved, will be reproduced on the Last Day.

22. And they will say to their skins: 'Why bear ye witness against us?' They will say: 'Allah has made us to speak as He has made everything *else* to speak. And He it is Who created you the first time, and unto Him have you been brought back.'³⁵⁷³

23. 'And you did not fear *while committing sins* that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you, nay, you thought that *even* Allah did not know much of what you used to do.'³⁵⁷⁴

24. 'And that thought of yours, which you entertained concerning your Lord, has ruined you. So *now* you have become of those who are the losers.'³⁵⁷⁵

وَقَالُوا الْجُلُودُ دِهْمٌ لَمْ شَهِدْ تُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا
أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ
وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَذِكْرُكُمْ ظَنُّكُمْ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْذَلَكُمْ
فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

3573. Commentary :

In the previous verse it was mentioned that the ears, eyes and skins of the guilty will give evidence against them. In this verse the first two organs have been omitted and only "the skins" are mentioned as having been given the power to speak. This is because the skin plays the most important part in man's actions. It includes not only the sense of touch but also all the other senses. While the sins of the eyes and the ears are confined to seeing and hearing, the sins of "the skin" extend to all organs or limbs of the body.

3574. Important Words :

تستترون (you fear) is derived from ستر. They

say ستر الشئى i.e. he covered the thing. The Arabs say هو لا يستتر من الله بستر i.e. he does not fear God. الستر means, cover, veil, curtain; shame, protection, fear. They say ما له ستر ولا حجر i.e. he has neither shame nor sense (Aqrab).

Commentary :

Besides the interpretation of the verse given in the text, it may also mean that the limbs of the sinners will say to them that not only did they not hide their evil deeds from them but they actually used them in committing sinful acts.

3575. Commentary :

In fact, all sins are the result of lack of a living faith in God.

25. "Now if they can endure, the Fire is their abode; ^band if they ask for favour, they are not of those whom favour will be shown.³⁵⁷⁶

26. And We had assigned to them companions who made *to appear* attractive to them what was before them and what was behind them; and the sentence became due against them along with the communities of Jinn and mankind 'that had gone before them. Surely, they were *the* losers.³⁵⁷⁷

R. 4 27. And those who disbelieve say: 'Listen not to this Qur'an, but make noise during its *recital* that you may have the upper hand.'³⁵⁷⁸

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِزُّوا
فَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ الْبُعْثِيِّينَ ٢٥

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ٢٦

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ
وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ ٢٧

^a4 : 22; 52 : 17.

^b16 : 85; 30 : 58.

^c3 : 138; 7 : 39; 13 : 31; 46 : 19.

3576. Important Words :

مُعْتَبِينَ (to whom forgiveness is shown) is derived from أَعْتَبَ which is again derived from عَتَبَ. أَعْتَبَهُ means, he granted him his good-will or favour; became well-pleased with him. They say اسألته فاعتبني i.e. I asked him to grant me or regard me with his good-will or favour or to become well-pleased with me and he granted me his favour (Lane & Aqrab). See also 30 : 58.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that the crimes of disbelievers are so heinous and hideous that they will not be granted, or taken back into, God's favour, or win back His pleasure, or they will not be allowed even to approach the عتبة (threshold) of the throne of God, to ask for His mercy.

3577. Commentary :

The words, *who made to appear attractive to them*, signify that the evil companions of disbelievers admired and praised their evil acts so as

to make those acts appear commendable to them. These evil associates, the verse says, will be made to share the punishment with those whom they beguiled and deceived.

The words, "what was before them and what was behind them," may mean, the deeds which they did in consequence of association with their bad companions and those they did in imitation of the bad deeds of their forefathers.

3578. Commentary :

The votaries of darkness have always tried to stifle the voice of truth by raising a hue and cry against it and have sought to confuse the minds of people by using all sorts of guiles and subterfuges. But never has falsehood succeeded in drowning the voice of truth. This is the purport of this verse. It may also refer to the noise which street urchins, employed by leaders of the Quraish, created when the Muslims recited the Qur'an.

28. "And most certainly We will make those who disbelieve taste a severe punishment, and, most certainly, We will requite them for the worst of their deeds."³⁵⁷⁹

29. That is the reward of the enemies of Allah—the Fire. For them there will be an abiding home therein as a requital because they persisted in denying Our Signs.

30. And those who disbelieve will say, 'Our Lord, show us ^bthose who led us astray from among both the Jinn and men, that we may trample them under our feet so that both of them may be of the lowest.'³⁵⁸⁰

31. 'As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying: 'Fear ye not, nor grieve; and receive glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised.'³⁵⁸¹

فَلَنذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ
لَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَاسِرٌ
الْخُلْدُ جَزَاءُ ۖ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ أَضَلَّانَا
مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا
يَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

^a32 : 22; 27 : 91. ^b33 : 69; 38 : 62. ^c21 : 103; 46 : 14.

3579. Commentary :

The verse means to say that God would only punish those wicked deeds of disbelievers whose heinousness had led to forfeiture of pardon, and will forgive most other crimes. See also 42 : 31.

3580. Commentary :

The word الذين means, two groups or sets of people, one from among the jinn and the other from among men.

3581. Commentary :

The present and the next verse show that it is in this very life that angels descend upon the Faithful to give them consolation and comfort

when they exhibit perseverance in the midst of severe trials and tribulations. It is when the Faithful are beset with dangers all round, when they are threatened with loss of life, property and honour in the path of God, and whatever is consoling and comforting forsakes them, so much so, that God tries them by closing the door of heartening visions and revelations for a time; it is when they are surrounded by all these dreary conditions—and though the last ray of hope passes away, yet they show perseverance—that the angels of God descend upon them, giving them the message of hope and good cheer. It is then that God reveals His beautiful Face to them.

32. 'We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter. Therein "you will have all that your souls will desire, and therein you will have all that you will ask for—

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيُّكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُى أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا
تَدْعُونَ ۖ

33. 'An entertainment from the Most Forgiving, Merciful God!'³⁵⁸²

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ۝

R. 5 34. And who is better in speech than he who invites *men* to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely of those who submit?'³⁵⁸³

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّى مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝

35. And good and evil are not alike. ^bRepel *evil* with that which is best. And lo, he between whom and thyself was enmity *will become* as though he were a warm friend.³⁵⁸⁴

وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى
هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ
كَأَنَّهُ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ ۝

^a25 : 17. ^b13 : 23; 16 : 126; 17 : 54; 28 : 55; 29 : 47.

3582. Commentary :

The verse means to say that it is when the Faithful show firmness under severe hardships and privations, and hold on through fiery ordeals, quite willing to suffer every disgrace in the way of God, fully submitting themselves to His will, that they attain to that stage of nearness to Him in which they become, as it were, the guests of God, for whose smallest need He has the greatest regard.

3583. Commentary :

There could be no better avocation for a

person than to call men to God and to conform his own conduct to the teachings he preaches to others and to submit entirely to God's will. This is the quintessence of the teaching of Islam.

3484. Commentary :

As the preaching of truth inevitably brings in its wake hardships for the preacher, the verse enjoins upon him to bear them patiently and with fortitude, and even to return good for the evil he receives at the hands of his persecutors.

36. But none is granted it save those who are steadfast; and none is granted it save those who possess a large share of good.³⁵⁸⁵

وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا
إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. ^aAnd if an incitement from Satan incite thee, then seek refuge in Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.³⁵⁸⁶

وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. ^bAnd among His Signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not yourselves before the sun, nor before the moon, but prostrate yourselves before Allah, Who created them, if it is Him Whom you *really* worship.³⁵⁸⁷

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ
لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ آيَاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a12 : 101 ; 17 : 54. ^b17 : 13 ; 36 : 38 ; 40 : 62.

3585. Important Words :

حَظ (share of good) is infinitive noun from حظ (hazza). They say حظ في الأمر i.e. he was or became fortunate or possessed of good fortune in the affair; he was or became wealthy. حظ means, fortune or particular good fortune; a share, portion or lot, especially of something good or excellent, luck; dignity; nobility (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The very high standard of good moral conduct referred to in the preceding verse can only be attained by putting up, without grumbling or fretting, with hardships one has to face in the way of God. And fortunate, indeed, is the person who disciplines himself to such a high standard.

3586. Commentary :

نزع meaning, an evil suggestion or mischief, the verse purports to say that evil-minded people always try to put obstacles in the way of the cause of truth and incite men of satanic nature against one who preaches the truth to them. It enjoins all preachers of truth to seek God's protection and pray to Him for help and succour when such an ugly situation faces them. See also 7 : 201 and 22 : 53.

3587. Commentary :

The present and the next two verses furnish an argument in support of God's Unity and Almightyness—two most important Divine attributes related to creation.

39. "But if they turn away with disdain, *they do it to their own detriment*, while those who are with thy Lord glorify Him night and day, and they are never wearied.³⁵⁸⁸

40. And among His Signs is this: that thou seest the earth *lying* withered, ^bbut when We send down water on it, it stirs and swells *with verdure*. Surely, He Who quickened it can quicken the dead *also*. Verily, He has power over all things.³⁵⁸⁹

41. Surely, those who deviate *from the right path* with respect to Our Signs are not hidden from Us. Is he, then, ^cwho is cast into the Fire better or he who comes out safe on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you will. Surely, He sees all that you do.^{3589A}

فَإِنْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ
بِالْلَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْأَمُونَ^{السهدة (٣٩)}

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْتَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا
لَمُتَّى النُّوْتِ إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ^(٣٩)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفُونَ عَلَيْنَا
أَفَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ يَأْتِي آمِنًا يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ^(٣٩)

^a7 : 207 ; 21 : 20.

^b22 : 6 ; 30 : 51 ; 35 : 28 ; 45 : 6.

^c38 : 29.

3588. Important Words :

يسئمون (are wearied) is derived from سئم which means, he turned away with disgust from it; he was disgusted with it or loathed it or became weary of it. سامة which is infinitive-noun is synonymous with ملال (weariness) and also exceeds it (Lane & Aqrab).

3589. Important Words :

خاشعة (withered) is the feminine of خاشع which is active participle from خشع which means, he was or became humble or submissive. خشعت الشمس means, the sun was about to set or it became eclipsed. خشع الورق means, the leaves withered. خشعت الارض means, the earth became dried up, not having been rained upon (Lane & Aqrab).

For ربت and اهتزت see 22 : 6.

Commentary :

The verse after pointing to a well-known law of

nature that when earth becomes dry and parched for lack of rain, God sends down water and it begins to bloom and blossom, draws attention to the fact that as the world had become morally and spiritually parched for want of spiritual rain, God revealed the Qur'an to give it new life. See also 22 : 6.

3589A. Important Words :

يلحدون (deviate) is formed from ألحد which is derived from لحد. They say ألحد في الدين i.e. he deviated or swerved from the right way with respect to religion, he impugned the religion (Lane & Aqrab). Thus the expression يلحدون في آياتنا signifies that disbelievers deviate from the right path with respect to our Signs, i.e. they adopt a crooked attitude when they are invited to ponder over the Signs of God. While outwardly they profess to be honest, in their heart of hearts they are insincere and crooked. See also 16 : 104.

42. Those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it comes to them *are the losers*. And, truly, it is a mighty Book.³⁵⁹⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ
عَزِيزٌ ۝

43. "Falsehood cannot approach it *either* from before it or from behind it. *It is* a revelation from the Wise, the Praiseworthy.³⁵⁹¹

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ
تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ۝

44. Nothing is said to thee but what was said to the Messengers before thee. ^bThy Lord is indeed the Master of great forgiveness; and *also* the Master of painful chastisement.³⁵⁹²

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝

^a15 : 10. ^b13 : 7 ; 53 : 33.

3590. Commentary :

The Qur'ān has been called ذكر (Reminder) in this verse because first, it presents and repeats its principles and themes in different forms, thus making men remember them. Secondly, because it reminds them of eternal truths that are ingrained in their nature. Thirdly, because it reminds them of the noble teachings that were revealed in former Scriptures; and fourthly, because by acting upon its teachings men can rise to the heights of spiritual eminence.

3591. Commentary :

The words من بين يديه may mean, before the Qur'ān was revealed and من خلفه after it has been revealed.

The verse purports to say that the Qur'ān is such a wonderful Book that "not one of the great truths, principles and ideals enunciated by it has ever been contravened or contradicted by ancient learning or modern discoveries and inventions" because it has been revealed by God Who is the Source and Fountain-head of all wisdom and knowledge.

3592. Commentary :

The verse seeks to comfort the Holy Prophet by telling him that all the Divine Messengers who passed before him were also subjected to the objections that are being levelled against him.

45. And if We had made it a 'Qur'an in a foreign tongue, they surely would have said, 'Why have not its verses been made clear? What! a foreign tongue and an Arab?' Say, 'It is a guidance and a healing for those who believe.' But *as to those* who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness for them. They are, *as it were*, being called to from a far-off place.³⁵⁹³

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَجَبِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ
ءَ الْعَجَبِيِّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى
وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ
وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ
بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

R. 6 46. And We did give Moses the Book, but differences were created concerning it; ^band had it not been for a word that had gone before from thy Lord, *the matter* would have been decided between them; and certainly they are in a disquieting doubt about it.³⁵⁹⁴

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلَا
كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ
لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

47. 'Whoso does right, it is for *the benefit* of his own soul; and whoso does evil, it will *only* go against it. And thy Lord is not at all unjust to *His* servants.

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٣٧﴾

^a16 : 104; 26 : 196; 46 : 13. ^b10 : 20; 11 : 111; 20 : 130; 42 : 15. ^c3 : 183; 8 : 52; 17 : 8; 22 : 11.

3593. Commentary :

The verse means to say that all the teachings of the Qur'an have been explained in most lucid, expressive and meaningful language, but it matters little to those who have closed their hearts and ears to it, and whose eyes have been sealed up.

The expression, *they are being called to from a far-off place* signifies that on the Day of Judgment the disbelievers will not be allowed to approach the Throne of God, but will be called from a far off place to render an account of their evil deeds. It may also mean that disbelievers have shut their ears to the Qur'an, and they refuse to

ponder over it, so it remains as unintelligible to them as an indistinct and confused voice that a person hears from a far-off place.

3594. Commentary :

The words, "the matter would have been decided between them," signify that the guilt of disbelievers was so serious and patent that they would have been destroyed long ago, had it not been for the fact that God had created mankind for spiritual progress and that men might receive His mercy. The Divine punishment is deferred and postponed also because during the interval many of the enemies of truth may have an opportunity to accept the same. See also 7 : 157 & 11 : 111, 120.

48. To Him *alone* is referred the knowledge of the Hour. And no fruits come forth from their spathes, "nor does any female bear *a child*, nor does she give birth *to it*; but with His knowledge. And on the day when He will call unto them, *saying*, ^b"Where are My 'partners'?" they will say, 'We declare unto Thee, not one of us is a witness *thereto*.'³⁵⁹⁵

49. ^cAnd all that they used to call upon before will be lost to them, and they will know for certain that they have no place of escape.³⁵⁹⁶

50. ^dMan does not tire of praying for good; but if evil touch him, he despairs, giving up *all* hope.

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ
مِّنَ الْأَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَى وَلَا تَضَعُ
إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ إِيَنَّ شُرَكَائِي قَالُوا
أَذْنُكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ ۝٣٨

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِن قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا
مَّا لَهُمُ مِن مَّحِيصٍ ۝٣٩

لَا يَسْتَمُ إِلَّا نَسْأَنُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ
فَيُتَوَسَّسُ قَنُوطٌ ۝٤٠

^a13 : 9 ; 35 : 12.

^b18 : 53 ; 28 : 63.

^c40 : 75.

^d11 : 10-11 ; 17 : 84.

3595. Commentary :

The "Hour" signifying the hour of the disbelievers' doom, the verse means to say that God alone knows how the seed that the Holy Prophet has sown in the soil of Arabia would grow, and what kinds of fruit it would bear. If the fruits were rotten they would be destroyed but if they were wholesome and delicious they would be preserved with care, *i.e.*, God alone knows whether the future Arab generations would accept or reject Islam, because on their attitude towards the new Faith would depend their salvation or destruction. The verse also seems

to imply a prophecy that idolatry would completely disappear from Arabia and the future generations of the disbelieving Quraish would accept Islam.

3596. Important Words :

محاص (place of escape) is derived from حاص. They say حاص عن الحق *i.e.* he deviated from the truth. حاص عن الشيء means, he turned away from the thing and became safe from it. محيص means, a place from which one turns away or aside; to which one flees; a place of refuge. ما عنه محيص means, there is no refuge from it (Lane & Aqrah).

51. "And if We make him taste of mercy from Us after *some* affliction that has befallen him, he will surely say, 'This is my due; and I do not think the Hour will ever come. But if I am returned to my Lord, I will surely have with Him the very best.' Then We will surely tell the disbelievers all that they did, and We will certainly make them taste hard punishment."³⁵⁹⁷

وَلَيْنَ أَذْقَنَهُ رَحْمَةً مِّمَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ
لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ
رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ
غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥١﴾

52. ^bAnd when We bestow a favour on man, he goes away, turning aside; but when evil touches him, lo! he starts offering long prayers.

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأِجِنِبُهُ
وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوُّ دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. Say, 'Tell me: if it is from Allah but you disbelieve in it—who is more astray than one who has drifted away from Allah?'³⁵⁹⁸

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ
بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. "Soon We will show them Our Signs in farthest parts of the earth, and among their own people until it becomes manifest to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord is Witness over all things?"³⁵⁹⁹

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ
يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۖ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

^a10 : 22 : 11 : 11 ; 30 : 37 ; 42 : 49.

^b11 : 10 ; 17 : 84.

^c51 : 21-22.

3597. Commentary :

It is human nature that when man is in trouble he is despondent and despairing, but if he is in affluent circumstances, he is the very embodiment of conceit and arrogance, and behaves as if no affliction had ever touched him, and in his conceit he begins to attribute all his success to his own effort and ability.

3598. Commentary :

The *Sūra* had begun with the subject of the

Quranic revelation and it has ended on the same theme. The disbelievers are here warned that if the Qur'ān is from Allah, as it certainly is, then they incur a grave responsibility by rejecting it.

3599. Important Words :

أَفَاقٍ (farthest parts) is the plural of أَفَقٌ which is derived from أَفَقَ (afaqa) which means, he went away at random or heedlessly. أَفَقٌ (ufqun) means, a side; a remote side; a border or extremity of a

55. Aye, they are surely in doubt concerning the meeting with their Lord. Aye. He certainly encompasses all things.³⁶⁰⁰

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مَرِيَةٍ مِّن لِّقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا إِنَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ ۝

land or of the earth and of the sky or the horizon of the sky and of the earth *i.e.* country, region; horizon, the wide world (Lane).

Commentary :

The verse repeats in most clear and emphatic terms the prophecy about the rapid spread of Islam which was made in the preceding verses. It purports to say that Islam would spread not only nearer home among the Arabs but in the remotest parts of the earth. The prophecy was made at a time (the present *Sūra* was revealed early in Mecca) when Islam was struggling for its very existence and humanly speaking there was every likelihood of its tender

plant being nipped in the bud. Yet within the brief space of a few years the whole of Arabia accepted Islam and before the dawn of the next century it had reached the farthest ends of the earth. The camel drivers of the Arabian desert became the teachers and leaders of mankind, spreading light and learning wherever they went.

3600. Commentary :

The verse means to say that disbelievers will continue to grope in the darkness of doubt and disbelief till Divine punishment overtakes them.

CHAPTER 42

AL - SHŪRĀ

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

The *Sūra* derives its title from v. 39 where Muslims are enjoined to decide all affairs of State and other matters of national importance by mutual consultation. The *Sūra*, like its predecessor, was revealed at Mecca and about the same time; but according to Noldeke a little later. Ibn 'Abbās, as reported by Merdawaih and Ibn Zubair, also holds the view that the whole of the *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca at a time when opposition to Islam was extremely severe and Muslims were in a tight corner.

Context

The preceding *Sūra* had ended on the note that anyone who rejects and opposes Heavenly Teaching injures only his own soul, and himself suffers the consequences of rejection. The present *Sūra* opens with the declaration that the Qur'ān has been revealed by the High and Great God, Who is Wise and Mighty and is Possessor of Power and is the Lord of Honour. The duty of the Holy Prophet is confined only to conveying to his people the Divine Message, and to warning disbelievers that there is a life after death when man shall have to render an account of his actions. So, if his people rejected him they would be doing so at their own cost.

Subject-Matter

The *Sūra*, like its predecessor, opens with the important subject of the Quranic revelation and proceeds to say that God is High and Almighty, the Possessor of Power and Praise, the Great Forgiver and Merciful. Man's sins are many and great. But God's forgiveness is even greater and His grace unbounded. His mercy and grace demanded that the Qur'ān should have been revealed to deliver man from the bondage of sin. But man is so constituted that he does not benefit from God's mercy, or from the warning of Divine Prophets, and worships gods of his own creation. The Holy Prophet, therefore, is told not to grieve over what the disbelievers do, as he is not appointed a guardian over them. His duty is to convey the Divine Message, the rest is God's own affair. He watches over them and keeps an account of their actions.

The *Sūra* then refers to the invariable Divine practice, viz., that whenever differences arise among the followers of various Faiths on basic principles of religion, God raises a Prophet to remove those differences and to lead them to the right path. But the basic principles of all religions being the same, all Divine Messengers followed the same religion, that is, total submission to God.

This "religion" found its best and completest exposition in the revelation of the Qur'ān and therefore it received a specific name—*Al-Islam*. The Holy Prophet is then enjoined to invite the whole of mankind to this most perfect and last Divine Teaching, and to let no persecution or persuasion stand in his way; and to tell disbelievers that since he believed in all revealed Scriptures, and since the Qur'ān also taught the same fundamental principles and ideals, as did those Scriptures, therefore, there was no ground for them to quarrel with him. But as they would not listen to reason and would insist on rejecting him, time will show who was right and who was wrong. One thing, however, was certain that as the truth of the Qur'ān was proved by strong and sound arguments, it was futile on the part of disbelievers to go on disputing or doubting its Divine origin.

The *Sūra* then goes on to say that God has revealed His commandments and ordinances in the form of a revealed Book. Compliance with these commandments, or their defiance, constitutes good or bad action. It is their deeds which determine the destiny of nations and individuals and make or mar their future. In the life of every individual and nation there comes a day when his or their actions are weighed in the balance. If their good actions outweigh their bad actions, a life of bliss and happiness awaits them. If, on the other hand, their evil deeds exceed their good actions, then they have a life of regrets and sighs. The *Sūra* continues to say that while true believers are afraid of the fateful hour and make adequate preparation for it, the disbelievers fritter away their energies and God-given faculties in frivolous pursuits, making no preparation to avert their doom.

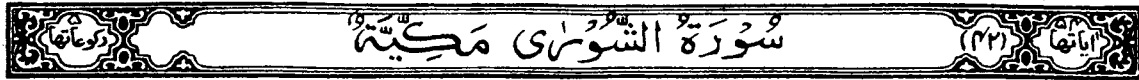
But lack of belief cannot defer or postpone the "Hour." This subject is further developed in another form, viz., that he whose efforts are directed towards acquiring the things of this life will have its material comforts, but, in the Hereafter, such a one will go before his God empty-handed, but the true believer, who seeks the pleasure of God, will receive Divine boons and blessings without measure or reckoning, in both the worlds. This is how God will requite the righteous, and the guilty people. Next, the *Sūra* says that the Holy Prophet has worked very hard and has suffered much in the task of furthering the cause of truth, and this was not from personal motives. He has no interests of his own. He seeks no recompense or reward for his service and suffering. Being full of the milk of human kindness, his only concern and desire is that men should establish true and real relationship with God. Could such a sincere and honest well-wisher of mankind be capable of forging lies against God? Yet his people accuse him of this most heinous of sins. Why cannot they, says the *Sūra*, understand this simple fact that the forging of lies against God is a deadly poison which brings about ruin of the forger? Instead of being ruined, however, the noble efforts of the Holy Prophet are producing excellent results and his cause is making uniform and rapid progress. So disbelievers should take a lesson from his life. But it is a matter for regret that by fighting the Prophet and his cause they will incur the displeasure of God. Man, however, is never beyond redemption. God is always prepared to forgive him if only he repents and turns to Him. And to His righteous servants He gives of His grace in unbounded measure.

The *Sūra* then draws attention to a physical phenomenon, viz., that whenever dry earth needs water God sends down rain from the clouds. Similarly, when the spiritual earth

had become dry, God sent down heavenly rain in the form of the Qur'ān. If after seeing so many earthly and heavenly Signs in support of the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers continued to oppose him and persisted in their disbelief, they would themselves be to blame for any misfortune that might befall them. No impediment or obstacle would be allowed to stand in the way of the spread of Islam because it was God's decree that it should spread and nobody can frustrate God's decree.

Then, after drawing attention to Divine favours, upon which material prosperity of man greatly depends, the *Sūra* points to the transitoriness of physical comforts and the vanity of human ambition, but refers to the permanence of favours and blessings reserved for the righteous and the God-fearing in the Hereafter. Next, mention is made of some of the prominent good qualities of the God-fearing, one of which is that they transact their national affairs and matters of importance by mutual consultation. After briefly referring to this fundamental principle which, in practice, was the basis on which affairs of the early Muslim State were transacted, the *Sūra* lays down the foundation of the penal laws of Islam. According to the Qur'ān the real object underlying punishment is the moral reformation of the guilty person. A man is to be punished for his crime if punishment is likely to do him moral good, but the punishment should, in no case, exceed the offence. If, on the other hand, forgiveness is likely to bring about in the offender a change for the better, he should be forgiven. There is no place in Islam for the monastic Christian teaching of turning the left cheek when the right is smitten, nor for the Jewish doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It adopts the golden mean.

Towards its close the *Sūra* holds out a stern warning to disbelievers. They are warned that if after the truth of Islam has been made quite manifest and they have seen many Heavenly Signs, they still refuse to accept it, they would do nobody any harm, but would ruin their own souls. They are further told that the Prophet has done his duty. He is but a Warner and he has warned them. He has not been made a guardian over them. His cause will triumph; the disbelievers will be removed from the scene, and their children will accept Islam. This is the unalterable decree of God to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. The Prophet is the Life and the Light and his is the way that leads to realisation of the great object of man's creation. At the end, the *Sūra* mentions the three forms of revelation.



1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."³⁶⁰¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bHā Mīm.³⁶⁰²

حَمِّ ②

3. 'Ain Sīn Qāf.³⁶⁰³

عَسَق ③

4. Thus does Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, reveal to thee and *He* revealed to those before thee.³⁶⁰⁴

كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِيَّاكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ④

5. "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and He is the High, the Great.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
الْعَظِيمُ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1.

^b41 : 2; 43 : 2; 44 : 2; 45 : 2; 46 : 2.

^c16 : 53; 22 : 65; 31 : 27.

3601. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3602. Commentary :

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters ^ح see the preceding two *Sūras*. It may, however, be briefly stated here that the abbreviated letters placed at the beginning of different *Sūras* stand for those Divine attributes which have specific bearing on the subject-matter dealt with in those *Sūras*. Thus the letters *Hā Mīm*, besides meaning the "Praiseworthy" and "the Lord of Honour," may also mean *حافظ الكتاب* *i.e.* Guardian of the Book, and *منزل الكتاب* *i.e.* Revealer of the Book, because all the *Sūras* which open with these two abbreviated letters deal particularly with the subject of revelation of the Qur'ān and its protection and guardianship.

3603. Commentary :

In the combined letters ^ع ^س (*'ain*) may stand for the Divine attribute ^{العلي} (the High), ^{العليم} (the All-Knowing), ^{العظيم} (the Great) or ^{العزیز} (the Mighty). The subject-matter of this *Sūra* revolves round these attributes which are repeatedly mentioned in the text. ^س may stand for ^{السمیع} (All-Hearing) and ^ق may represent the Divine attributes, ^{القادر} or ^{القدير} (the Possessor of Power and Authority), ^{القوى} (the Powerful) or ^{القمهار} (the Most Supreme). These Divine attributes also are mentioned expressly or by implication at various places in this *Sūra*.

3604. Commentary :

The *Sūra* opens with the important subject of revelation of the Qur'ān as implied in the Divine attributes *Hā Mīm*, placed at its beginning.

6. The heavens may well-nigh rend asunder from above them; ^aand the angels glorify their Lord with His praise and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Behold! it is surely Allah Who is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful.³⁶⁰⁵

7. And *as for* those who take for themselves protectors beside Him—Allah watches over them; ^band thou art not a guardian over them.³⁶⁰⁶

8. Thus have ^cWe revealed to thee the Qur'an in Arabic, ^dthat thou mayest warn the Mother of Towns, and all around it; and *that* thou mayest warn *them* of the Day of Gathering, whereof there is no doubt: A party *will be* in the Garden, and a party in the blazing Fire.³⁶⁰⁷

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا أَنْ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ①

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهُ حَفِيفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ ② وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ③

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ
الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعِ لِأَرْبِ
فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ ④

^a13 : 14; 16 : 50-51.

^b6 : 108; 88 : 23.

^c20 : 114; 39 : 29; 43 : 4; 46 : 13.

^d6 : 93.

3605. Commentary :

The verse may mean that man's sins and his ingratitude are so great that their enormity might cause the heavens to rend asunder but God's mercy and forgiveness are greater than man's sins. These Divine attributes demanded the revelation of the Qur'an in order that mankind might be delivered from sin. Besides this, angels beg of God forgiveness and mercy for His erring creatures. The reference in the verse may also be to the blasphemous dogma of the sonship of Jesus, which is so heinous a doctrine that in spite of God's grace and mercy and of the fact that angels beg of God forgiveness for His sinful creatures, God will destroy those people who hold this belief. But to those who repent God is Most Forgiving and Merciful.

3606. Commentary :

The particle على (over) being generally used in the sense of "against," the meaning of the expression *الله حفيظ عليهم* would be that God is watching over the blasphemous beliefs of men and is keeping an account of them and will punish them if they did not repent.

3607. Commentary :

For an explanation of *قرآنًا عربيًا* see 12 : 3 and 41 : 4.

The reference in the words *أم القرى* (Mother of Towns) may be to Mecca, because Mecca was not only the commercial and political metropolis of Arabia at the time when the Qur'an was revealed but was destined for all time to come to be the spiritual centre of the whole world and from its breast the whole of

9. ^aAnd if Allah had *so* pleased, He could have made them one people; but He admits into His mercy whomsoever He pleases. And *as for* the wrongdoers, they will have no protector and no helper.³⁶⁰⁸

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ
يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ
مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ^٩

10. ^bHave they taken *for themselves* protectors other than Him? But it is Allah Who is the *real* Protector. And He quickens the dead, and He has power over all things.

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ^{١٠}

2 11. ^cAnd in whatsoever you differ, the *final* decision thereof *rests* with Allah. Say: 'Such is Allah, my Lord; in Him I put my trust, and to Him I *always* turn.'³⁶⁰⁹

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ^{١١}

^{a2} : 214; 10 : 20; 11 : 119.

^{b13} : 17; 39 : 44.

^{c20} : 70; 39 : 47.

humanity was to suck the milk of spiritual life. Geographically also Mecca is situated in the centre of the world. The Qur'ān has been called أم الكتاب (Mother of the Books) and Arabic أم اللسان (Mother of Tongues) and Mecca أم القرى (Mother of Towns or Mother-Town).

The reference in the expression يوم الجمع *i.e.* the Day of Gathering, may preferably be to the Judgment Day which has also been called يوم الحشر *i.e.* the Day of Resurrection (41 : 20), يوم التناد *i.e.* the Day of Mutual Calling (40 : 33), يوم التلاق *i.e.* the Day of Meeting (40 : 16) and يوم الحساب *i.e.* the Day of Reckoning (40 : 28), in the Qur'ān. يوم الجمع may also refer to that Day of Gathering when all the forces of disbelief assembled in the Battle of the Ditch to administer a *coup de grace* to the rising power of Islam. It may also refer to the Latter

Days when the whole of mankind was to become, as it were, like one family. See also 38 : 12; 54 : 46.

3608. Commentary :

The expression يدخل من يشاء في رحمته, besides the translation given in the text, may also mean, "He admits into His mercy him who himself seeks to be admitted into it."

3609. Commentary :

The verse means to say that as it has been the invariable Divine practice that whenever differences among the followers of different religions assume dangerous dimensions God sends down a new revelation to reveal His will; so now that great differences have arisen among the followers of different Faiths, God has revealed the Qur'ān to which men should now refer all their disagreements and differences for decision and judgment.

12. *He is* "the Maker of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs of your own selves, and of the cattle *also He has made* pairs. He multiplies you therein. There is nothing whatever like unto Him; and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.³⁶¹⁰

13. ^bTo Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. ^eHe enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases and straitens *it for whomsoever He pleases*. Surely, He knows all things full well.

14. He has prescribed for you the religion which He enjoined on Noah, and which We have *now* revealed to thee, and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, *saying*, 'Establish obedience to Allah in the earth, and be not divided therein.' Hard upon the idolaters is that to which thou callest them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns to Him.³⁶¹¹

فَاطَرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُكُمْ فِيهِ
لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ^{١٢}

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ^{١٣}

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى
وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ
عَلَى الشُّرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي
إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ^{١٤}

^a6 : 15; 14 : 11; 35 : 2.

^b39 : 64.

^e13 : 27; 29 : 63; 34 : 37; 39 : 53.

3610. Commentary :

The pronoun *فيه* (therein) being taken as referring to the relationship subsisting between man and wife, the expression "He multiplies you therein" would mean that God multiplies mankind by the relationship that exists between husband and wife.

The words, *is nothing whatever like unto Him*, are meant to remove a possible misunderstanding to which the sentence, "God has made a pair of everything," might have given rise, *viz.*, that God also needs a consort to make a pair. The words signify that it is impossible to conceive of anything like God. He is far above human perception and comprehension. It is, therefore,

foolish to try to find a likeness between Divine and human attributes though the two possess some very remote and incomplete resemblance.

3611. Commentary :

It is worthy of special note that while for great Prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the expression *وصى* (He has prescribed) has been used, for the Holy Prophet a different expression, *viz.*, *أوحينا* (We have revealed) has been used which shows that though other Prophets also received Divine revelation, yet the most perfect and completest revelation—the revelation *par excellence*, was given to the Holy Prophet.

15. ^aAnd they did not become divided but after knowledge had come to them, through jealousy among themselves. ^bAnd had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from thy Lord for an appointed term, *the matter* would surely have been decided between them. And surely those who were made to inherit the Book after them are in a disquieting doubt concerning it.³⁶¹²

16. To this, then, do thou invite mankind. ^cAnd be thou steadfast as thou art commanded, ^dand follow not their evil inclinations, but say, 'I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down, and I am commanded to judge justly between you; Allah is our Lord and your Lord. 'For us is *the reward* of our works, and for you *the reward* of your works. There is no quarrel between us and you. Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the return.'³⁶¹³

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ
بَغِيًّا بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ
أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ^{١٥}

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ أَمِنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ
وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ
لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَ
بَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ^{١٦}

^a45 : 18; 98 : 5.^b10 : 20; 20 : 130; 41 : 46.^c11 : 113;^d5 : 50; 6 : 57.² : 140; 10 : 42.

3612. Commentary :

While the pronoun "they" in the expression "and they did not become divided" refers to the followers of the Prophets mentioned in the previous verse, the reference in the words, "those who were made to inherit the Book after them," is either to those followers of the above-mentioned Prophets who inherited the Book after those Prophets had passed away or to the people in the time of the Holy Prophet who became heirs to Divine revelation after the followers of the Israelite Prophets had defied and disobeyed the Divine Message.

3613 Commentary :

The Holy Prophet is here enjoined to tell the followers of earlier Prophets that he believes in all the revealed Scriptures that had come before him. There was, therefore, no cause for them to quarrel with him. But since they continued to reject him, so time will show who is in the right and who in the wrong. The words, "Allah will gather us together" may imply a prophecy that disbelievers will join the fold of Islam.

17. And those who dispute concerning Allah after He has been accepted—^atheir plea is null and void in the sight of their Lord; and on them is God's wrath and for them will be a severe punishment.³⁶¹⁴

وَالَّذِينَ يُجَاجُونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتَجِيبَ
لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ⑭

18. Allah it is ^bWho has sent down the Book with truth and *also* the Balance. And what will make thee know that the Hour may be near at hand?³⁶¹⁵

إِلَهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَمَا
يُذَرِّيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ ⑮

^a40 : 6.

^b55 : 8, 57 : 26.

3614. Important Words :

داحضة (futile) is feminine active participle from دحض. They say دحضت رجله *i.e.* his foot slipped. دحضت حجته means, his argument, plea or evidence was or became null and void; it proved false. داحضة means, null and void; futile; false: slippery (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The words, "after He has been accepted," mean, after the truth of Islam has been established and people have begun to join its fold in large numbers. After such an irrebuttable testimony in favour of Islam, the verse purports to say, it is foolish and futile on the part of disbelievers to go on disputing and doubting its truth.

3615. Commentary :

The verse mentions two very important things which God has sent down for man's guidance and benefit: (a) "the Book" *i.e.*, the laws of the *Shari'at*, (b) "the Balance" *i.e.*, standards by which human actions are appraised, judged, measured and weighed; or it may mean the faculty by which man can distinguish between

right and wrong or, as some say, عدل (justice), which signifies the right use of the Book. In fact, in this life (and more so in the next life) all human actions are weighed in Divine scales and he whose good actions outweigh his bad actions leads a life of bliss and happiness, and he whose bad deeds outweigh his good deeds burns in the fire of failure, regrets and sighs (101 : 7-12).

The word ميزان (balance) may also refer to the Qur'ān, meaning that the Qur'ān does not say anything which is not supported by reason. Thus the Qur'ān constitutes an infallible criterion (ميزان) to judge what is right and what is wrong.

Elsewhere in the Qur'ān (57 : 26) the expression أنزل (He has sent down) has also been used about الحديد (iron) which represents power that enforces the Divine Law.

The words, *and what will make thee know that the hour may be near at hand*, mean that if disbelievers did not accept the Message of Islam and their bad deeds outstripped their good deeds, Divine punishment would overtake them very soon.

19. "Those who believe not therein seek to hasten it; but those who believe are fearful of it, and know that it is the truth. Beware! those who dispute concerning the Hour are in error, far gone.³⁶¹⁶

يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ
أَلَا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَارِزُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ فِي ضَلَالٍ

بَعِيدٍ ①٩

20. ^bAllah is Benignant to His servants. He provides for whom He pleases. And He is the Powerful, the Mighty.

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ②٠

3 21. "Whoso desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his harvest; and ^dwhoso desires the harvest of this world, We give him thereof, but in the Hereafter he will have no share.³⁶¹⁷

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ
وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَ
مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ تَصِيبٍ ②١

22. Have they *such* associates of Allah as have made lawful for them in religion that which Allah has not allowed? And but for *Our* word about the *final* judgment, the matter would have been decided by *now* between them. And surely the wrong-doers will have a grievous punishment.

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ أَشْرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ
بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَ
إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ②٢

^a13 : 7; 27 : 47. ^b6 : 104; 22 : 64. ^c3 : 146; 4 : 135; 17 : 20. ^d3 : 146; 17 : 19.

3616. Commentary :

Disbelievers do not believe in the Day of Judgment, so they demand its speedy coming; but with true believers, the case is quite different. They know that on the Day of Judgment they will have to render an account of their actions and, therefore, while they make every preparation for it, they are also afraid to face it.

3617. Commentary :

In v. 19 above believers and disbelievers

in life after death have been mentioned together. The present verse warns those whose efforts are wholly directed towards acquiring the vanities and paltry things of this life that they will be deprived of the bliss and blessings of everlasting life of the Hereafter, but those who prepare for the next life will have Divine blessings bestowed upon them without measure or diminution.

23. Thou wilt see the wrongdoers in fear on account of that which they have earned, and it is sure to befall them. "But those who believe and do good works will be in Meadows of the Gardens. They shall have with their Lord whatever they will desire. That is the great bounty of God."³⁶¹⁸

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ
بِهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَةٍ
الْجَنَّةِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. This it is whereof Allah gives the glad tidings to His servants who believe and do good works. ^bSay: 'I ask of you no reward for it, except such love as subsists between kindred.' And whoso earns a good deed, We give him increase of good therein. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Appreciating.³⁶¹⁹

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ
فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا
حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

^a2 : 83; 3 : 58; 13 : 30; 22 : 57; 68 : 35.

^b25 : 58; 38 : 87.

3618. Commentary :

The verse constitutes an extension of the subject-matter of vv. 19 and 21 above. In v. 19 disbelievers were stated as scornfully rejecting the very idea of a life after death and defiantly demanding its speedy coming but the believers being conscious of their great responsibilities were described as being afraid of facing it. In this verse it is stated that on the Day of Judgment the tables will be turned upon disbelievers. They will be afraid of confronting the consequences of their evil deeds while believers will be happy in the Gardens of Bliss, basking in the sun of God's love.

3619. Commentary :

The expression لا أسئلكم عليه أجرا إلا المودة القربى is supposed to bear several interpretations. Some of these are as follows: (1) I ask of you no reward for calling you to

the way of God except that, being related to you by ties of kinship, my solicitude for your spiritual well-being impels me to invite you to accept the message of truth. In this case إلا is إستثناء منقطع. (2) I ask of you no reward for the great work I am doing for your spiritual benefit except that you should learn to live and behave like blood relations. (3) I ask no reward or return for my solicitude and love for you except that in offering opposition to me you should at least have some regard for the ties of relationship that I have with you. (4) I want no reward from you except that you should learn to develop a liking for attaining nearness to God (the word قربة قرى meaning قربة i.e. nearness). This last meaning agrees with 25 : 58 where the Holy Prophet is stated as saying to his people: "I ask of you naught in return for it except that he who will, may take a way to his Lord."

25. Do they say, 'He has forged a lie against Allāh?' If Allāh had so willed, He could seal thy heart. ^aBut Allāh is blotting out falsehood *through thee* and is establishing the truth by His words. Surely, He knows full well what is in the breasts.³⁶²⁰

26. ^bAnd He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants, and forgives sins. And He knows what you do.³⁶²¹

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ
يَخْتَمُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ وَيَخُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُخِ الْحَقَّ

بِكَلِمَتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ٥٥

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو

عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ٥٦

^a13 : 40.

^b9 : 104; 33 : 74.

3620. Commentary :

The verse seems to administer a rebuke to disbelievers by saying to the Holy Prophet, "Do disbelievers have the hardihood to say that you are a liar and an impostor? Do they not look at your life and your work? Is the great work that you are doing the work of an impostor? Invention of lies against God is a deadly poison which causes moral death of the inventor and brings about his complete destruction. But your noble efforts in the cause of truth are producing excellent results. Moreover, the hearts of liars and forgers are sealed, but your heart has been opened (94 : 2) and you have scaled the highest peaks of spiritual eminence. All this shows that you are not an impostor but a true Prophet of God and are under His care and protection."

The verse may also mean; "If God has willed that your enemies should have been punished for calling you a liar and a forger, He would have sealed your heart *i.e.* He would have made your heart devoid of all mercy and solicitude for them, so that instead of being solicitous for their spiritual well-being, you would have invoked

God's curses upon them, but He has chosen not to do so." In fact, the Holy Prophet's heart was full of the milk of human kindness even for his bitterest enemies and he never prayed against them as Prophets Moses and Noah had prayed (11 : 89 & 71 : 27).

The words, *But Allāh is blotting out falsehood through thee and is establishing the truth by His words*, may signify: Why should God make the Prophet's heart devoid of sympathy for his opponents when He has decreed that falsehood shall be vanquished and truth shall triumph and the Prophet's erstwhile enemies shall become his devoted followers; and why should the Prophet make use of forgery for the propagation of his ideals when disbelievers will certainly accept Islam by seeing Divine prophecies being fulfilled before their very eyes.

3621. Commentary :

The theme of the preceding verses is continued here. The verse purports to say that the Holy Prophet's enemies will repent of their sins and God will accept their repentance and that they will join the fold of Islam.

27. "And He accepts *the prayers of* those who believe and do good works, and gives them *more than their due reward* out of His grace; and *as for* the disbelievers, they will have a severe punishment.

28. And if Allah should enlarge the provision for His servants, they would rebel in the earth; ^bbut He sends down according to a *proper* measure as He pleases. Indeed, He is All-Aware and All-Seeing of *the condition* of His servants.

29. ^aAnd He it is Who sends down rain after they have despaired, and spreads out His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.

30. ^dAnd among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and *of* whatever living creatures He has spread forth in both. And He has the power to gather them together whenever He pleases.³⁶²²

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ②٧

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَكِنْ يُنْزِلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ
بَصِيرٌ ②٨

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنْزِلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا
وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ②٩

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ
فِيهِنَّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ
قَدِيرٌ ③٠

^a2 : 187.

^b15 : 22.

^c30 : 34; 31 : 35.

^d30 : 123.

3622. Commentary :

The verse embodies a unique testimony to the Divine origin of the Qur'ān. It was not possible for any human being, much less for an unlettered son of the desert, to say, as far back as 1400 years ago, when the science of astronomy was yet in its infancy, that apart from our planet, life in some form or other existed in heavenly bodies. It was reserved for the Qur'ān to disclose this great and marvellous scientific truth as the words of this verse, viz., "Whatever living creatures He has spread forth in *both*," show. In-

deed the creation of the heavens and the earth and what living creatures exist in them and the wonderful order that pervades the whole universe constitute an infallible testimony to the knowledge and power of Almighty God Who has revealed the Qur'ān and Who would bring together the creatures of the heavens and the earth whenever in His infallible wisdom He would deem fit. The reference in the last sentence of the verse may be to the possibility of the creatures living on earth and in heavenly bodies becoming united at some future time.

٢. 4

31. "And whatever misfortune befalls you, is due to what your own hands have wrought. And He forgives many of your sins."³⁶²³

32. "And you cannot frustrate God's purpose in the earth; nor have you any friend or helper beside Allah."³⁶²⁴

33. "And of His Signs are the sailing ships on the sea like mountain-tops."³⁶²⁵

34. If He so will, He can cause the wind to become still so that they become motionless upon the surface thereof—in that, surely, are Signs for every patient and grateful person—³⁶²⁶

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ
وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۝٣١

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ۝٣٢

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ۝٣٣

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ۝٣٤

a4 : 80.

b6 : 135; 10 : 54; 11 : 34; 29 : 23.

c31 : 32; 55 : 25.

3623. Commentary :

The disbelievers are warned that if after having seen so many Signs in support of the Qur'ān they persisted in rejecting it, they will themselves be to blame for any misfortune that befell them.

3624. Commentary :

Disbelievers are further warned that God has decreed that Islam shall become victorious and they will not be able to frustrate Divine decree and that no obstacle or impediment will be allowed to stand in the way of its onward march.

3625. Important Words :

جوار (sailing ships) is the plural of جارية which is derived from جرى. They say جرت السفينة i.e. the ship floated or sailed. جرت الشمس means, the sun pursued its course. جرت الأمر means, the thing happened. جارية means, a ship, because of its running upon the sea; a girl or young woman; a female slave; the wind, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

اعلام (mountain-tops) is the plural of علم (alam) which is derived from علم (alam). علم means, he marked it. علم شفته means, he slit his lip. علم (alam) means, an impression or impress; a trace; a thing set up on the way for guiding people; a minaret; a mountain or mountain-top or a long mountain; a banner or standard; the chief of a people (Lane & Aqrab).

3626. Important Words :

رواكِد (motionless) is the plural of رَاكِدَة which is fem. active participle from رَكَد which means, it was or became still, motionless, fixed or stationary (Lane).

Commentary :

In this and several other verses the Qur'ān points to the great part that ships were to play in international intercourse. This truth, revealed to a son of the desert, as far back as fourteen hundred years ago, speaks volumes for the Divine origin of the Qur'ān.

35. Or He can destroy them because of that which they have earned but He forgives many of *their sins*.

36. And *He destroys them so that* "those who dispute about the Signs of Allah may know *that* they have no refuge.

37. ^bAnd whatever you have been given is only a temporary provision of this life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord,³⁶²⁷

38. ^cAnd those who eschew the more grievous sins and indecencies, and, when they are wroth, they forgive,³⁶²⁸

39. And those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, ^dand whose affairs are *decided* by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them,³⁶²⁹

أَوْ يُوقَهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۝٣٥

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
مَّحِيصٍ ۝٣٦

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ
رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ۝٣٧

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا
مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ۝٣٨

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ
شُورًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ۝٣٩

^a22 : 4; 40 : 5.

^b28 : 61.

^c4 : 32; 53 : 33.

^d3 : 160.

3627. Commentary :

The verse points to the transitoriness of material means of disbelievers and to the vanity of human ambitions and aspirations.

3628. Commentary :

The words كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ comprise all kinds of sins and moral lapses, but a separate mention is made of anger because many sins spring from anger when it exceeds legitimate bounds.

3629. Commentary :

The verse lays down شورى (mutual consultation) as the basic principle which should guide Muslims in the transaction of their national affairs. This simple word contains the nucleus of a representative form of government of which the West is so proud. The *Khalifa* or Head of an Islamic State is bound to take counsel with the representatives of the people when he is to take a decision of vital national importance. See also 4 : 59.

40. And those who, when a wrong is done to them, defend themselves.

41. "And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and *thereby* brings about an improvement, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers."³⁶³⁰

42. There is no blame on those who defend themselves after they have been wronged.³⁶³¹

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ
فَاجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

وَلَكِنْ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ
سَبِيلٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

42 : 195; 10 : 28; 16 : 127.

Incidentally, the verse implies a prophecy that the harassed and persecuted followers of the Holy Prophet would soon be entrusted with the great responsibility of conducting the affairs of a great State. The *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry when the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance and the then poor and helpless Muslims did not even know where to lay their heads. The following verses also point to the great responsibilities of Muslims when vast political power would fall into their hands.

3630. Commentary :

The verse forms the basis of the penal laws of Islam. The real object underlying the awarding of punishment to the guilty person, according to Islamic teaching, is his moral reformation. If forgiveness is calculated to do him some moral good, he should be forgiven. He should be punished, if punishment is likely to lead to his reformation; but the punishment

should in no case be disproportionate to the offence committed. Islam does not believe in the monastic teaching of turning the left cheek when the right is smitten nor in the Jewish doctrine of "an eye for eye." It adopts the golden mean. The next three verses shed some further light on this subject.

3631. Commentary :

Islamic principles about punishing an offender may not appeal to visionaries and impractical idealists, but as a practical religion, Islam lays down most wholesome and practical solutions for problems of law, of economics and morals. Not only does it give to the aggrieved party the right to have the wrong done to him righted at the expense of the offender, but it also regards self-defence as the moral duty of a Muslim. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "He who is killed in defence of his property and honour is a martyr" (Bukhārī, *kitāb al-Maẓālim wa'l-ghaṣab*).

43. The blame is only on those "who wrong men and transgress in the earth without justification. Such will have a grievous punishment."³⁶³²

44. ^bAnd he who is patient and forgives—that surely is a matter of high resolve.³⁶³³

5 45. "And he whom Allah adjudges astray—there is no protector for him thereafter. And thou wilt find the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying: 'Is there any way of return?'"

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ

فِي الْأَرْضِ بَغْيًا الْحَيُّ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

وَلَكِنَّ صَبْرًا وَغَفْرًا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَائِلٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ

وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ

إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

^a10 : 24.

^b16 : 127.

^c4 : 144; 17 : 98; 18 : 18.

3632. Commentary :

This verse further elaborates the theme of the previous two verses and purports to say that it is not those who claim recompense for the injury done to them who are to blame ; on the contrary, the blame lies on those who go about trampling under foot the rights of other people and creating mischief and disorder in the land. They will and must be punished.

3633. Commentary :

Though Islam has given the aggrieved party full right to have the injury done to him recompensed at the expense of the guilty person, the noblest course recommended to him, however, is to bear with patience the injury and to forgive the aggressor. But it is given to extremely few—only to God's Beloved and Elect

—to possess this very noble moral quality. Our Holy Prophet gave a practical demonstration of this moral quality at the time of the Fall of Mecca. He did not utter even a single word of reproach to, much less punish, his blood-thirsty enemies, who had hounded him out of his native place and had killed in cold blood his poor and innocent followers and had placed a price at his head. He forgave them with a magnanimity unparalleled in human history, with the words, "Go, you are all free. No blame shall lie on you this day; may Allah also forgive you" (Hishām).

The verse also implies a prophecy that Muslims would be shortly given power and dominion over their opponents, and so in the hour of triumph they should be forgiving, forbearing and merciful to their enemies.

46. And thou wilt see them brought before it (the Fire), casting down *their eyes* on account of disgrace, looking at it with a *furtive* glance. ^aAnd those who believe will say, 'The losers indeed are those who ruin themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.' Behold! the wrongdoers are to remain in a lasting punishment.³⁶³⁴

47. ^bAnd they have no helpers to help them other than Allah. And for him whom Allah adjudges astray there is no way at all.

48. ^cHearken ye to your Lord before there comes a day for which there will be no averting in opposition to the decree of Allah. There will be no refuge for you on that day, nor will there be for you any chance of denial.³⁶³⁵

49. But if they turn away, We have not sent thee as a guardian over them. Thy duty is only to convey the Message. ^dAnd truly when We cause man to taste of mercy from Us, he rejoices therein. But if an evil befalls them because of what their hands have sent forth, then lo! man is ungrateful.

وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَشِيعِينَ مِنَ الدَّلِيلِ
يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِلَّا إِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُقِيمٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدٍّ
لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ نَكِيرٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا إِنْ عَلَيْكَ
إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مَتَاعًا رَخِيًا فَرِحَ
بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَبَاقِدَتْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ كَفُورٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a18 : 30; 25 : 38.

^b17 : 57.

^c39 : 55.

^d17 : 84; 30 : 34; 39 : 9.

3634. Commentary :

The stealthy glance is the glance of a guilty person who is hauled up for his crimes and is waiting to hear the sentence passed against him.

3635. Commentary :

After having described in the preceding verses

the pitiable condition of disbelievers when they would be brought as criminals before the Judgment Seat of God, in the present verse they are warned not to treat lightly the Divine Message, but follow the Prophet and abide by God's commandments before the awful day arrives.

50. "To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He pleases. He bestows daughters upon whom He pleases, and He bestows sons upon whom He pleases;

لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْاَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ
يَهْبُ لِمَنۡ يَّشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَيَهْبُ لِمَنۡ يَّشَآءُ
ٱلذُّكُوْرُ ۝

51. Or He mixes them, males and females; and He makes whom He pleases barren. Surely, He is All-Knowing, Powerful.³⁶³⁶

اَوْ يَزْوِجُهُمْ ذُكْرًا وَّ اِنَاثًا وَيَجْعَلُ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ
عَقِيْرًا ۗ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ۝

52. And it is not for a man that Allah should speak to him except by *direct* revelation or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He pleases. Surely, He is High, Wise.³⁶³⁷

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْ مِّنۡ
وَّرَآئِ حِجَابٍ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُوْلًا فَيُوْحٰى بِاٰذِْنِهٖ
مَا يَشَآءُ ۗ اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى حَكِيْمٌ ۝

45 : 41; 39 : 45; 57 : 3.

3636. Commentary :

In this and the previous verse the disbelievers are warned that God has decreed that whereas the followers of Islam will increase and multiply, the disbelievers will decrease and become barren—their children joining the fold of Islam.

3637. Important Words :

وَحْيًا (revelation) is infinitive noun from وَحَى (waha). They say وَحَى اِلَى فُلَانٍ i.e. He pointed to him; sent to him a messenger; he talked to him secretly, intending to keep the talk secret from others. أَوْحَى الْعَمَلُ means, he did the thing quickly (Aqrab). See also 5 : 112.

Commentary :

The verse makes mention of the three ways in which God speaks to His servants and reveals His will to them: (a) He speaks direct to a person without the aid of an intermediary. (b) He makes him see a vision which may or may not be interpretable, or sometimes makes him hear words in a state of wakefulness, when he is not seeing the person speaking to him. This is the significance of the words, "from behind the veil." (c) God sends down a messenger—an angel who delivers the Divine Message to him. See also 99 : 6.

53. And thus have We revealed to thee the Word by Our command. Thou didst not know what the Book was, nor what the faith. But We have made it (the revelation) a light, whereby We guide such of Our servants as We please. And truly thou guidest *mankind* to the right path,³⁶³⁸

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ
تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ
نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ
لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. The path of Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Remember, to Allah do all things return.³⁶³⁹

صِرَاطُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
هُوَ إِلَهُ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٤﴾

3638. Important Words :

روحاً (Word) means, soul or spirit; breath of life; Divine revelation or inspiration; the Qur'ān; angel; mercy of God; Word of God. See also 4 : 172 and 16 : 3.

Commentary :

The Qur'ān has been called here روح because through it a morally and spiritually dead people received a new life. It gave light and life to the

Arabs who in turn spread that light to the farthest ends of the earth.

3639. Commentary :

Islam is the life and the light, and the way that leads to God and to realization by man of the great and sublime object of his creation.

The words, "to Allah do all things return," mean that the beginning and the end of all things is in the hand of Allah.

CHAPTER 43

AL-ZUKHRUF

(Revealed before Hijra)

Place of Revelation, Title and Context

According to Qurṭubī there exists complete unanimity of opinion among scholars that this *Sūra*, like its three predecessors, was revealed at Mecca. Ibn ‘Abbās also lends his powerful support to this view. It is, however, difficult to assign an exact date to its revelation. Scholarly opinion generally is inclined to place it towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth year of the Call. The *Sūra* takes its name from v. 36.

The previous *Sūra* had ended on the note that the revelation which descends on Heavenly Messengers and Prophets by Divine command possesses an element of mystery. It was further stated that before revelation actually descended upon the Holy Prophet he was not conversant with its nature and significance, nor did he know what Faith was. The present *Sūra* opens with the affirmation that because the Qur’ān has been revealed in a most clear and eloquent language and because also it deals with all basic truths and its teaching is easily comprehensible, therefore, in spite of the element of mystery in its revelation, there is no reasonable ground for anyone to reject it. It further says that God would not stop sending fresh revelation whenever there was genuine need for it, just as Prophets of God did not cease to come because they were mocked and jeered at. The system of the coming of Divine Reformers will continue despite anything the disbelievers might say or do.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The *Sūra*, like its three predecessors, opens with the declaration that the Qur’ān has been revealed by God, the Lord of all Honour and Praise, and proceeds to deal with the subject of Divine Unity—its basic theme—in a way and form different from that in which it has been dealt with in other *Sūrās* of the Ḥā Mīm group. It further says that God, in order to establish His Unity, has been sending, from time immemorial, His Messengers and Prophets. They preached and taught that God was One. They were rejected and opposed and persecuted. But this did not cause God to stop sending new Prophets and new revelations. Prophets continued to appear in the fulness of time, and the greatest of them came in the person of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad.

The *Sūra* further develops this argument and says that God has created the heavens and the earth for the service of man, and that He has made full provision for his physical needs.

Whenever the earth becomes dry and parched, and life is on the verge of extinction, God sends down fresh rain from heaven and the earth begins to vibrate with new life. When God has taken so much care to provide for the material needs of man and for his physical comforts, it is inconceivable that He should have neglected or ignored to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. It is to meet man's moral needs that God sends a new Prophet and a new revelation. But such is man's ingratitude that instead of giving thanks to God for His multifarious and multitudinous favours and instead of acknowledging His Unity, he, in his ignorance and folly, begins to set up equals to God in various shapes and forms; and even goes so far as to shift his responsibility for his idolatrous practices to God, brazenly saying that if God had so willed, he would not have worshipped idols. To this blasphemy the *Sūra* gives a devastating reply to the effect that not only do human intelligence and commonsense revolt at this impudent reasoning of disbelievers, there is no Scriptural evidence either in their possession that might support their false beliefs. Their stock argument consists in the fact that their beliefs and practices came down to them from their forefathers and that they were not prepared to give up the time-honoured ways of their ancestors for the sake of a man who was just an ordinary mortal like them. The argument is absurd. Yet, this was the foolish plea on which all the Prophets of God were rejected in their respective times. And the result was that the rejectors were punished.

In order to expose the absurdity of this plea and to accuse the disbelieving Quraish, from their own mouths, the *Sūra* cites the example of the Prophet Abraham. It seems to say to them, "If you cannot give up the Faith of your forefathers; and you must follow them, then why do you not follow Abraham, your great ancestor, who was an uncompromising iconoclast and a strict and sincere believer in the Oneness of God. He was so firm a believer in Divine Unity and preached this belief to his children and grand-children with such perseverance and sincerity that it stayed in his posterity for a very long time. But, says the *Sūra*, the plea of following ancestral beliefs put forward by disbelievers is a false pretext. The real cause of their disbelief lies in their wealth which has made them proud and arrogant, and in their pride they say that the Qur'ān should have been revealed to a man of some consequence in one of the two great cities of Arabia. In answer to this arrogant assumption of superiority the disbelievers receive a severe rebuke and are told : Since when have they arrogated to themselves the right to be the distributors of God's grace and mercy and to decide who is deserving of it and who not? By implication they are further told that what they call greatness carries no weight in the sight of God. Material wealth and power are trash compared to the great spiritual wealth which the Holy Prophet possesses. In order to drive home to them the paltriness of the things of this world, the *Sūra* proceeds to say, that were it not that the obliteration of disparity of wealth, position and status would have made existence of social order impossible and created complete chaos, God would have given to disbelievers tons of gold and silver, so much so that even the stairways of their houses would have been of gold! These things were nothing in God's sight. The disbelievers are further warned that if indulgence in these things made them oblivious of God, they will fall into the Satan's trap which will bring about their ruin.

Next, the *Sūra* tells the Holy Prophet that his duty is confined to the preaching of the Message of Islam. The disbelievers have persistently shut their eyes and ears to this Message,

and by deliberately choosing to grope in the dark and to sink deeper and deeper into sin, they have drawn Divine wrath upon their heads. They will be seized with punishment but only after the Prophet's departure from among them. The Holy Prophet is comforted that the treatment he has received at the hands of his people is just like the treatment which disbelievers in the past meted out to their Prophets. Like him, the earlier Prophets preached Unity of God and like him they were rejected, opposed and persecuted. Moses was one of those Prophets. He was sent to Pharaoh and his chiefs, with the message of truth. He showed them many Signs, each being greater than its forerunner. But, for all the Signs shown by him, Moses only received derision and mockery. Pharaoh mockingly asked his people whether he (Pharaoh) was not the monarch of the whole of Egypt and the possessor of great wealth and position? Was he not better than Moses, who was poor and was unable even properly to express himself? Did Moses possess any wealth, or did angels descend from Heaven to bear witness to his truth? What, after all, was Moses's claim to their allegiance? This is how by rejecting Moses, Pharaoh excited God's wrath, and his destruction served as an object-lesson for those who might dare oppose Divine Messengers, or reject them.

As stated above, the main theme of this *Sūra* is the unsparing denunciation of idolatry and false gods. But while Jesus is worshipped as God by Christians, the Qur'ān not only does not condemn him but actually mentions his name with great respect. At this exception of Jesus the disbelieving Quraish naturally took great offence. To explain this exception, the *Sūra* towards its close makes a little digression. It says that the reason for this exception is that Jesus was a noble Prophet of God and that he invited his people to worship Allah alone Who was his and their Lord. But his people ignored his teachings and deified him. So the fault lay with his people and not with him, so the people will be punished for their idolatry and polytheistic beliefs.

Towards the end, the *Sūra* holds out a warning to disbelievers that if they did not give up wrong beliefs and evil practices they will burn in the fire of Hell. It gives to the righteous the glad tidings that they will go to "Gardens of Eternity" wherein they will have what they desire, and that the Divine blessings and boons they will enjoy will know no end. The *Sūra* ends on a brief but most clear and convincing discourse on the Unity of God, which is its main subject.

سُورَةُ الزُّكْرِفِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٣)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁶⁴⁰

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bHā Mīm.³⁶⁴¹

حَمْ ②

3. By this perspicuous Book,³⁶⁴²

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ③

4. "We have made it a Qur'an in clear, eloquent language that you may understand.³⁶⁴³

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ④

5. And surely, it is *safe* in the Mother of the Book, exalted *and* full of wisdom in Our sight.³⁶⁴⁴

وَأَنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1.

^bSee 4 : 2.

^c20 : 114; 39 : 29; 42 : 8; 46 : 13.

3640. Commentary :

See 1 : 1.

3641. Commentary :

For an explanation of حم see 40 : 2, 41 : 2 and 42 : 2.

3642. Commentary :

و (by) may also mean, We cite as witness. See 41 : 4.

3643. Commentary :

The *Sūra* being the fourth of the Hā Mīm group, naturally opens with the important subject of the revelation of the Qur'an. See also 12 : 3 ; 20 : 114 and 41 : 4.

3644. Important Words :

أم means, mother; source, origin or basis of a thing or its stay or support; place of collection or comprehension and combination of a thing. أم الكتاب meaning, Mother of the Book signifies source of commandments; basis of the Book (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 8; 13 : 40.

Commentary :

The word أم signifying the original source, the expression انه في أم الكتاب would mean that the Qur'an existed in the knowledge of God—the original source, or it may signify that this was in the knowledge of God and was eternally decreed that the Qur'an would form the basis of the last perfect Law which God would reveal for the guidance of humanity.

6. Shall We then take away the Reminder from you, neglecting you because you are an extravagant people?³⁶⁴⁵

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7. "And how many a Prophet did We send among the earlier peoples!³⁶⁴⁶

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8. ^bBut there never came to them a Prophet but they mocked at him.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيِّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٨﴾

^a15 : 11.

^b15 : 12; 36 : 31.

3645. Important Words :

أَفَنَضْرِبُ (shall We take away). أَضْرَبَ means, he struck him. They say, ضَرَبَ الدَّهْرَ بَيْنَنَا i.e. the time separated us. عَنْهُ ضَرَبَ means, he shunned, left or avoided him or turned away from him (Lane & Aqrab).

صَفْحًا (neglecting) is derived from صَفَحَ. They say صَفَحَ عَنْهُ i.e. he turned away from him or he turned away from him and left him; he turned away from his sins, or he forgave him. ضَرَبْتُ عَنْهُ صَفْحًا means, I turned away from him and left him. The word صَفْحًا is here an infinitive-noun and therefore is in the accus. case as in the phrase قَعَدْتُ جُلُوسًا (I sat down); or it is in the accus. case as an adv. noun, and the meaning is, I turned away from him aside. أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا would thus mean, shall We take away the Reminder from you or separate you from the Reminder and turn away Ourselves from you and neglect you. Or shall We then turn away the Reminder from you, and not invite you thereby to the Faith, turning away Ourselves from you. Or shall We then neglect you and not teach you what is incumbent on you (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 274 and 15 : 86.

Commentary :

The verse means to say that Heavenly Reminders in the form of Divine Signs will never cease to come. If rejection of Heavenly Signs had been a reasonable ground for their discontinuance no Prophet would have come after the first one. But Prophets continued to appear and to show Signs in spite of the fact that most of them were rejected. The Prophets are sent to the world to lead men to God and to warn wrongdoers of the evil consequences of their transgressions and iniquitous behaviour. So long as man needs to be guided and led to God—and man will need guidance till the end of time—and so long as there are wicked men in the world who require to be warned and reformed, so long will Prophets continue to appear.

3646. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that though earlier Prophets were rejected and opposed, yet God did not cease to send new Prophets on that account. So this system of the coming of Heavenly Teachers will continue till the end of time and the jeering and opposition of disbelievers and their evil deeds will not stop it.

9. And We destroyed *those* who were stronger in power than these, and the example of the earlier peoples has gone before.

10. And if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say, 'The Mighty, the All-Knowing *God* created them.'³⁶⁴⁷

11. "He, Who has made the earth for you a cradle, and has made pathways for you therein, that you may follow the right way,"³⁶⁴⁸

12. And Who sends down water from the clouds in proper measure, and We thereby quicken a dead land—even so will you be raised—³⁶⁴⁹

13. And Who has created all the pairs, and has made for you ships and cattle whereon you ride,

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَمِثْلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ⑨

وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ⑩

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ
فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ⑪

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا
بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَيِّتًا ⑫ كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ⑬

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ
الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ ⑭

420 : 54.

3647. Commentary :

For an explanation of this verse see vv. 27 : 61, 62.

3648. Commentary :

For the theme developed in this and the next few verses see 16 : 9. Briefly, the argument given is that when God has made ample provision for the physical needs and requirements of man, it is inconceivable that He should have omitted to provide for his moral and

spiritual needs.

3649. Commentary :

As physical life depends on water that comes down as rain, so does spiritual life depend on the spiritual water of Divine revelation. The words, "even so will you be raised" signify that even as dry and parched earth blooms and blossoms into new life when rain falls on it, so will a morally and spiritually dead people receive new life through Divine revelation.

14. That you may sit firmly upon their backs, *and* then, "when you are firmly seated thereon, you may remember the favour of your Lord, and say, 'Holy is He Who has subjected these to us, and we were not capable of subduing them *ourselves*.'³⁶⁵⁰

15. 'And to our Lord surely shall we return.'³⁶⁵¹

16. And they assign to Him a portion of His servants *as His children*. Indeed man is clearly ungrateful.³⁶⁵²

2. 17. ^bHas He taken daughters from what He has created, and honoured you with sons?

18. 'Yet when tidings are given to one of them of that the like of which he ascribes to the Gracious God, his face is darkened and he is choked with inward grief.

لَتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ
إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ
لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ۝

وَرَأَيْنَا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لِنُقَلِّبُونَ ۝

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ
مُبِينٌ ۝

أَمْ آتَاخَذَ مِنْهَا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ۝

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِهَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا
ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسَوِّدًا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ۝

^a11 : 42; 23 : 29.

^b6 : 101; 16 : 58; 37 : 153; 52 : 40; 53 : 22.

^c16 : 59.

3650. Important Words :

مقرنين (capable of subduing) is derived from أقرن للشئى' و أقرن الشئى' . They say i.e. he had the power and the strength to do the thing, he had the requisite ability and strength for it. مقرنين means, having the power or being able to do a thing (Aqrab).

3651. Commentary :

In the preceding two verses we were told that God has made boats and ships so that we may

use them for travel. In the present verse attention is drawn to the fact that man should not lose sight of the journey to his spiritual goal which is God Himself.

3652. Commentary :

The Sūra had opened with the subject of revelation, of which the basic purpose is the establishment of Divine Unity. This and the following few verses repudiate the idolatrous doctrine of assigning sons and daughters to God.

19. *Do you assign to God one who is reared among ornaments, and who is not clear in disputation?*³⁶⁵³

أَوْ مَنْ يُنشَأُ فِي الْجَلِيلَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ ①٩

20. "And they describe the angels, who are the servants of the Gracious God, as females. Did they witness their creation? Then their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned."³⁶⁵⁴

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا أَشْهَدُ وَآخَلَقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ②٠

21. And they say, "If the Gracious God had so willed, we should not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do but conjecture."³⁶⁵⁵

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ②١

22. "Have We given them a Scripture before this, so that they are holding fast to it?"³⁶⁵⁶

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَسْكِنُونَ ②٢

①17 : 41; 37 : 151; 52 : 40.

②6 : 149; 16 : 36.

③37 : 157-158; 68 : 38.

3653. Commentary :

The reference in the verse may also be to the idols which were bedecked and bejewelled with ornaments. The verse administers a subtle rebuke to idol-worshippers that they worship idols which can neither speak nor answer their prayers nor defend themselves against attacks made upon them. See also 20 : 90 and 21 : 64.

3654. Commentary :

The verse does not mean that God is displeased with idolaters because they ascribe to Him daughters rather than sons, for, attributing sons is as hateful to Him as the ascribing of daughters (19 : 89-93). What the verse means to point out here is that these people ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves.

3655. Commentary :

It is human nature that man always tries to shift the responsibility for his sins to others. Here quite unblushingly the idolaters protest that they are helpless creatures in the hands of God. If He had so willed, He would have stopped them from idol-worship.

The words "they have no knowledge whatsoever of that," signify that no reason or argument based on knowledge can be adduced in support of idol-worship. It is all based on foolish conjecture and surmise.

3656. Commentary :

The verse means to say that idol-worshippers not only do not possess any reason or argument to uphold their irrational doctrines, they cannot even adduce the evidence of a Divine Scripture in their support.

23. Nay, but they say, "We found our fathers following a *certain* course, and we are guided by their footsteps."

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ
مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. And thus *has it always been* that We never sent any Warner before thee to any township but the evil leaders thereof said: ^b'We found our fathers following a *certain* course, and we are following in their footsteps.'³⁶⁵⁷

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ
إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهُمْ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا
عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. *Their Warner* said: 'What! even though I bring you a better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?' They said: 'Certainly we disbelieve in that which you are sent with.'³⁶⁵⁸

قُلْ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. "So We punished them. Then see what was the end of those who rejected *the Prophets* !

فَأَنْتَقِمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

^a2 : 171; 7 : 29.

^b21 : 54; 26 : 75.

^c7 : 137 ; 43 : 56.

3657. Commentary :

The hackneyed plea of idolaters to support idol-worship has always been that it was a time-honoured practice observed by their forefathers. In fact, old ideas and customs die hard. They have always proved a stumbling block in the way of disbelievers to accept the Divine Message. For the meaning of the word أمة see 6 : 39 and 16 : 121.

3658. Commentary :

The verse exposes the absurdity of the plea of disbelievers that they would not give up the time-honoured customs observed by their forefathers

and the beliefs held by them. It means to say that if this plea were accepted as valid, then no reform could ever take place because it is only when people stick to false and foolish beliefs and fall into evil ways that a Divine Reformer is sent to guide them to the path of virtue and wean them away from their cherished beliefs? If, after the falsity of their beliefs is demonstrated to them, the disbelievers still persist in their perversity, how can a reformation take place? But such is the tragedy of human affairs that men would not easily accept truth and would rather continue to invent pleas and pretexts for rejecting it.

- 3 27. And *remember* when "Abraham said to his father and his people: 'I definitely disown what you worship,'³⁶⁵⁹

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ
مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

28. 'Except Him ^bWho created me, and He will surely guide me.'

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٣٦﴾

29. And He made it a word to last among his posterity, that they might turn *to God*.³⁶⁶⁰

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

30. Nay, but I allowed them and their fathers *temporary* enjoyment until there came to them the truth and a Messenger who makes *his Message* clear.³⁶⁶¹

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءَ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

^a6 : 79 ; 9 : 114; 60 : 5.

^b26 : 29.

3659. Commentary :

By citing the example of Abraham, the great progenitor of the Arabs, the verse seeks to drive home to them the untenability of the plea of ancestral beliefs and customs. It appears to say to them, "If you do not accept the Message of Islam because by so doing you have to renounce the beliefs of your forefathers, then at least follow Abraham, your own great ancestor who was a strict and sincere believer in the Unity of God."

3660. Important Words :

عقب (posterity) is derived from عقب ('aqaba). They say عقبه *i.e.* he came after him, as though at his heels; he followed him closely; he succeeded him. عقب means, heel; son; grandson; offspring; progeny; posterity; what follows immediately.

Commentary :

The argument against the plea of ancestral

beliefs put forward by disbelievers is further developed in the present verse. It purports to say that if they are sincere in saying that they follow the beliefs and customs of their forefathers, then they should also follow the example of their ancestor, the Patriarch Abraham, who was such a firm believer in Divine Unity and who preached it to his posterity with such sincerity and persistence that this belief came to stay among them for a long time, *i.e.*, his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons all believed in One God.

3661. Commentary :

This verse further says that the plea of following ancestral beliefs on the part of disbelievers is only a pretext. The real reason for their rejecting the Holy Prophet is that they possess worldly wealth and material means which have made them proud and arrogant.

31. But when the truth came to them they said, "This is magic, and we do reject it."

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ
كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. And they say, 'Why has not this Qur'an been sent to some great man of the two towns?'³⁶⁶²

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نَزَلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ
عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Is it they who would distribute the mercy of thy Lord? It is We Who distribute among them their livelihood in the present life, and We exalt some of them above others in degrees of rank, so that some of them may make others subservient to themselves. And the mercy of thy Lord is better than that which they amass.³⁶⁶³

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ
فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمُ بَعْضًا سَخِرِيًّا
وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

^{a27} : 14.

3662. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the possession of wealth and material means have made disbelievers so conceited and oblivious of spiritual values that they have the audacity to say, "Why could not God find a better and more influential and high-placed man in society and entrust him with the great task of preaching His Message than this man (the Holy Prophet)."

The word "two towns" are generally understood to mean Mecca and Ṭāi'f. They were two important centres of Arab social and political life in the Holy Prophet's time.

3663. Commentary :

The verse answers the objection of disbelievers that God should have selected some "great man"

for the great responsibility of conveying His Message to mankind. It purports to say that what they call greatness carries no weight in the sight of God. Material wealth, power and influence are trash compared to the great spiritual wealth which the Holy Prophet possesses. Difference in wealth, power and status among men is in agreement with the Creator's own plan. But for this difference, human society would have gone to pieces. Apart from this, these things have no intrinsic worth; they only tend to turn men away from God. The verse also administers a severe rebuke to disbelievers asking them : Since when have they arrogated to themselves the role of being the distributors of God's grace and mercy, or the privilege of deciding who is deserving of it and who not ?

34. And were it not that *all* mankind would have become one *type* of people, We would have given to those who disbelieve in the Gracious God, roofs of silver for their houses, and silver stairways by which they could go up;

35. And doors of silver to their houses, and couches of silver, on which they could recline.

36. And ornaments of gold. But all that is nothing but a temporary provision of the present life. And the Hereafter with thy Lord is for the righteous.³⁶⁶⁴

4 37. "And he who turns away from the remembrance of the Gracious God, We appoint for him a satan, who becomes his companion.

38. ^bAnd surely they hinder them from the way of God, but they think that they are rightly guided;³⁶⁶⁵

وَلَوْلَا اَنْ يَكُوْنَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِنِ
يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ لِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ سُقْفًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ
عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَلِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ اَبْوَابًا وَسُرَرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَكُونُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَزُخْرَفًا وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَالْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطٰنًا
فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَاللّٰهُمَّ لِيَصُدُّوْهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَيَجْسَبُوْنَ اَنْهُمْ
مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾

a18 : 101, 102; 20 : 101; 72 : 18.

b8 : 35; 16 : 89; 22 : 26; 48 : 26.

3664. Commentary :

The verse purports to say that were it not that by the obliteration of disparity of means, wealth and position, all men would have become of one type and human society would have ceased to function, God would have provided all disbelievers with houses made of silver, having doors and stairways of silver, and would have given them couches of silver on which to recline and other ornaments of gold, because these things possess no worth or value in His sight or at the most are a temporary embellishment of this worldly life which itself is of very short duration. But the life eternal and

everlasting, whose blessings will know no limitation or diminution is only for the righteous and God-fearing.

3665. Important Words :

عشا يعشو (turns away) is derived from عشا يعشى and عشى يعشى. عشا & عشى means, he was or became blind or weak-sighted, he did not see by night or by day. عشا عنه means, he turned away from him. من يعش عن ذكر الرحمن therefore would mean, (1) and he who turns away from the admonition of the Gracious God; (2) and such as is blind to the admonition of the Gracious God; (3) and such as feigns or pretends blindness (Lane & Aqrab).

39. Till, "when such a one comes to Us, he says to *his companion*, 'Would that between me and thee were the distance of the East and the West!' What an evil companion is he!"³⁶⁶⁶

40. ^bAnd the fact that you are partners in punishment will not profit you this day, for you have acted wrongfully.³⁶⁶⁷

41. ^cCanst thou, then, make the deaf hear, or guide the blind and him who is in manifest error?³⁶⁶⁸

42. ^dAnd if We take thee away, We shall nevertheless exact retribution from them,^{3668A}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ لَئِيتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ
الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَيُشَسِّسُ الْقَرْيَةَ ۝٣٩

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ
مُشْتَرِكُونَ ۝٤٠

أَفَأَنْتَ تَسْمَعُ الصَّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى وَمَنْ كَانَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝٤١

فَأَمَّا نَذَبْنَا بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِبُونَ ۝٤٢

^a3 : 31.

^b37 : 34.

^c10 : 43; 27 : 81.

^d13 : 41; 40 : 78.

Commentary :

In the preceding verse it was stated that worldly wealth and material gains are mere trash that turn men away from God. The present verse warns those who turn away from God and are blind to Divine admonition that they would fall a victim to the snares of Satan and would consequently come to grief.

3666. Commentary :

When man is confronted with the evil consequences of his wicked deeds, he seeks to avoid and shun his erstwhile companions as if he never knew them. The expression بعد المشرقين which literally means "distance of two Easts" has been appropriately translated as "distance of the East and the West."

3667. Commentary :

The fact that both the accomplices are equal partners in a crime and, therefore, are equal sharers in punishment, can be of no use or benefit to either of them because it lessens neither their individual responsibility nor the punishment which each of them incurs and suffers.

3668. Commentary :

When disbelievers deliberately shut their eyes and ears to the message of truth, they sink deeper into sin till they are completely lost.

3668A. Commentary :

This verse, like several other verses of the Qur'ān, shows that Divine punishment was to come upon the disbelievers after the Holy Prophet had departed from among them; and so it came to pass.

43. Or "We shall show thee that which We have promised them; for surely We have complete power over them."³⁶⁶⁹

44. So ^bhold thou fast to that which has been revealed to thee; for thou art on the right path.

45. And, truly, "it is a source of eminence for thee and for thy people; and you will be inquired about."³⁶⁷⁰

46. ^aAnd ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before thee, 'Did We appoint any deities besides the Gracious God, to be worshipped?'³⁶⁷¹

5 47. And 'We did send Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said, 'I am truly a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.'³⁶⁷²

أَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِم مُّقْتَدِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَأَنَّهُ لَذِكْرُكَ لَكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَسْأَلُ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِلَهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

^a10 : 47; 13 : 41; 40 : 78. ^b11 : 113; ^c21 : 11; 38 : 2. ^d21 : 26.

^e11 : 97; 14 : 6; 23 : 46; 40 : 24.

3669. Commentary :

The verse indicates that in order to establish the truth of Islam, Heavenly Signs, appeared not only in the Holy Prophet's own life-time, but will continue to appear after his death, in all ages.

3670. Commentary :

The word ذكر meaning eminence (Lane), the verse purports to say that through the Qur'an the Holy Prophet and his followers will acquire great eminence and honour, and the time will soon come when people will enquire about their doings and will seek and get guidance from their precepts and example.

3671. Commentary :

The verse means to say that study of the

lives of all Divine Messengers reveals the fact that they all taught and preached Unity of God and directed all their efforts to its establishment in the world. There is not to be found in their teachings the faintest support of polytheism or remotest reference to it.

3672. Commentary :

In the immediately preceding verse it was mentioned that the basic teaching of all Divine Messengers was the Unity of God. In this and the following verses, a study of the story of the greatest Israelite Prophet, Moses, has been enjoined for the purpose of showing that he laid the greatest emphasis on Divine Unity.

48. But when he came to them with Our Signs, lo! they laughed at them.³⁶⁷³

49. And We showed them no Sign but it was greater than its *preceding* sister Sign, and We seized them with punishment, that they might turn to Us.³⁶⁷⁴

50. And they said, 'O thou magician, pray for us to thy Lord, according to the covenant He has made with thee that if He avert this evil from us, then we will surely follow guidance.'

51. But when We removed the punishment from them, behold! they broke their word.³⁶⁷⁵

52. And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, saying, 'O my people! does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me and these streams flowing under me? Do you not then see?

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَمَا نُرِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَ

أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهُ السَّجْرَادُ لَنَا رَبٌّكَ بِمَا عَمِدَ عِنْدَكَ

إِنَّا لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يُقَوْمُ أَلَيْسَ لِي

مُلْكٌ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِي أَفَلَا

تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

^{a7} : 135.

^{b7} : 136; 23 : 76.

3673. Commentary :

All Prophets and Divine Messengers have always been held up to scorn and scoffed and mocked at. Their beginning is so humble and their circumstances so poor that their prophecies about the great and bright future of their followers appear only to be wild talk to their people, exciting laughter and inviting jokes and jeers from them.

3674. Important Words :

أُخْت (sister) is the feminine of أَخ. They say أَخَاهُ i.e. he became a brother, a friend or a companion to him. أَخَاهُ (ākhāhu) means, he fraternised with him; acted with him in a brotherly manner. أَخِيْتُ بَيْنَ الشَّيْئَيْنِ means, I united the

two things. أَخ means, a brother; a friend; a companion, or associate or a fellow, and أُخْت means, a sister (Lane & Aqrab).

3675. Commentary :

The Bible is full of instances of the repeated breach of promise by Pharaoh and his people. Whenever they found Divine punishment actually overtaking them, they begged Moses to pray to God to remove it and promised that if He removed it they would believe in him. But every time they broke their plighted word till the cup of their iniquities became full and they could no longer avert Divine punishment by such subterfuges. The consequence was that they were drowned in the sea.

53. 'Nay, I am better than this fellow who is despicable and can scarcely express *himself* clearly.³⁶⁷⁶

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ ۖ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبَيِّنُ ۝٥٣

54. 'And why have not bracelets of gold been bestowed on him, or "angels accompanied him in serried ranks?"

فَلَوْلَا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُقَرَّرِينَ ۝٥٤

55. Thus did he make light of his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed they were a wicked people.

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ ۖ فَاطَاعُوهُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ ۝٥٥

56. So, when they angered Us, ^bWe exacted retribution from them, and drowned them all.³⁶⁷⁷

فَلَمَّا أَصَفُونَا انتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝٥٦

57. And We made them a precedent, and an example for the coming generations.

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ ۝٥٧

58. And when the son of Mary is mentioned as an instance, lo! thy people raise a clamour thereat;³⁶⁷⁸

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ ۝٥٨

٥٦ : 9; 11 : 13; 25 : 8.

٥٨ : 46; 43 : 26.

3676. Commentary :

Pharaoh met Moses's invitation to accept his Message by telling his people that being a mighty monarch he was infinitely more deserving of their allegiance than a despicable man like Moses who could not properly express himself.

3677. Important Words :

آسفونا (they angered Us) is derived from أسف (asifa). They say أسف عليه i.e. he grieved intensely over it; he was angry with him. آسفاه (āsafahū) means, he angered him, he grieved him, he made him to grieve or lament (Lane & Aqrab).

3678. Important Words :

يصدون (raise a clamour) is derived from صد. They say صد عنه كذا, aorist يصد (yasuddo) i.e. he hindered him from such a thing; he turned him away from it. صد aorist يصد (yasiddo) means, he raised a clamour; he cried (Aqrab).

Commentary :

The main theme of this *Sūra*, as already mentioned, is the Unity of God. The *Sūra* condemns idolatry in very strong terms. But in the case of Jesus who is also worshipped as God by Christians, it has made an exception. Not only has it not condemned him but has

59. And they say, 'Are our gods better, or he?' They mention not this to thee but for *the sake of* disputation. Nay, but they are a contentious people.

60. He was only Our servant, ^aon whom We bestowed Our favour, and We made him an example for the Children of Israel. ³⁶⁷⁹

61. And if We *so* willed, ^bWe could make from among you angels in the earth to be successors *therein*. ³⁶⁸⁰

وَقَالُوا ۖ إِلٰهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ ۖ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا
بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي
إِسْرَآءِيلَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَخْلُفُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

^a3 : 50 ; 61 : 7. ^b17 : 66 ; 25 : 22-23.

actually mentioned his name with great respect. This invidious distinction (as it appeared to the Quraish of Mecca) between Jesus and their idols cut them to the quick. The verse under comment refers to this mortification of the Quraish. The exception made in case of Jesus needed some explanation. The explanation is given in the verses that follow.

The word ^{أشبه} signifying anything similar, like, equal to another (6 : 39), the verse, besides the meaning given in the text, may also signify that when the people of the Holy Prophet—the Muslims—are told that another person who would be like Jesus and would be his counterpart would be raised from among them to regenerate them and restore their lost spiritual glory, they, instead of being glad over this good tidings, raise a clamour. The verse may thus be taken as referring to the Second Coming of Jesus, which

has taken place in the person of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.

3679. Commentary :

The verse gives the reason why Jesus has not been included among the false gods of the idolaters and has been spared the denunciation and condemnation to which they have been subjected. The reason is that he was a righteous servant of God and a model of virtue and piety upon whom God had bestowed His blessings.

3680. Commentary :

The verse means to say that God could, if He had so willed, send down angels on earth who would have conveyed the Divine Message, but angels could not serve as an example and model for men, therefore, God had always commissioned men to convey His will to, and to serve as model and pattern for, men.

62. But verily, he was a sign of the Hour. So have no doubt about it, but follow me. This is the right path.³⁶⁸¹

63. And let not Satan hinder you. Surely, he is to you an open enemy.

64. And when Jesus came with clear proofs, he said, 'Truly, I am come to you with wisdom, and to make clear to you some of that about which you differ. So fear Allah and obey me.'³⁶⁸²

وَأَنَّهُ لَعَلُّمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ
هَٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

وَلَا يَصُدُّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلَفُونَ فِيهِ ۖ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا نِوَاصِيَّ ﴿٦٤﴾

43 : 51.

3681. Commentary :

The 'hour' here may denote the time of the end of Mosaic Dispensation and of the rise of a new *Sharī'at*, and the pronoun • in the expression أَنَّهُ may refer to Jesus. The verse may thus signify that Jesus was the last Prophet of the House of Israel. His fatherless birth symbolised the total spiritual sterility of the Israelite people. It also constituted a warning to the Jews that by their persistent rejection of truth and opposition to Heavenly Messengers, they had forfeited the Divine blessing of prophethood and, therefore, no Prophet would henceforth spring from the loins of a Jewish father. It was in this sense that Jesus was a "sign of the Hour." Jesus himself realised this. He said to his people:

Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom

of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21 : 43).

If the pronoun • in the expression أَنَّهُ be taken to refer to the Qur'ān, as some Commentators have done, the verse would mean that the Qur'ān is "a sign of the Hour" i.e. a sign that the Israelites are about to be deprived of the Divine gift of prophethood and that another Dispensation—Islamic Dispensation—will now take the place of Mosaic Dispensation. Or the verse may signify that all the great calamities and catastrophes that will overwhelm the world, or the great changes that will take place in future, have been mentioned specifically or by implication in the Qur'ān.

3682. Commentary :

The reference in the verse is to the Second Coming of Jesus. See also 3 : 50.

65. 'Verily ^aAllah—He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the right path.'³⁶⁸³

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. But ^bthe parties differed among themselves. So woe to the wrongdoers because of the punishment of a grievous day.

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْيَوْمِ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. 'They wait not but for the Hour to come suddenly upon them, while they perceive *it* not.'³⁶⁸⁴

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. Friends on that day will be foes to one another, ^cexcept the righteous.'³⁶⁸⁵

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

٢. 7 69. To them God will say, 'O My servants, there is 'no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve';³⁶⁸⁶

يُعْبَادُ لَاخَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

^a3 : 52 ; 5 : 73 ; 19 : 37. ^b19 : 38.
^c5 : 56; 19 : 97.

^e10 : 51; 12:108; 22 : 56; 47 : 19.
^f10 : 63; 39 : 62.

3683. Commentary :

This verse constitutes another and a very clear proof why Jesus has been excepted from the denunciation referred to in verse 58 above. The reason is that Jesus called men to the worship of God who was his Lord and the Lord of all the worlds and that he never claimed Divinity for himself.

3684. Commentary :

The verse refers to the original theme of the *Sūra* and means to say that disbelievers, by rejecting the Holy Prophet, are inviting the hour of punishment to come suddenly upon them.

3685. Commentary :

In the hour of distress all friendships are forgotten. Friends desert each other, even turn into enemies. Elsewhere the Qur'ān gives a graphic description of the pitiable condition of sinners when they are confronted with the evil consequences of their wicked deeds. See 70 : 11-15; 80 : 35-38.

3686. Commentary :

In the hour of decision the righteous servants of God do not regret their past actions, nor do they have any anxiety for the future.

70. 'You who believed in Our Signs and submitted,

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

71. "Enter ye the Garden, you and your wives, honoured and happy."³⁶⁸⁷

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُخْبَرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

72. To them will be passed round ^bdishes of gold and cups, and therein will be all that the souls desire and *in which* the eyes delight. 'And therein will you abide.'³⁶⁸⁸

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ
وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

73. 'And 'this is the Garden to which you have been made heirs because of what you did.

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

74. "Therein for you is fruit in abundance, of which you will eat.'

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

75. 'The guilty will certainly abide in the punishment of Hell.

إِنَّ الْجَارِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

76. 'It will not be mitigated for them, and they will be seized therein with despair.'³⁶⁸⁹

لَا يُفْتَرَّ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

77. And We wronged them not, but it was they themselves who were the wrongdoers.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

^a30 : 16. ^b56 : 19; 76 : 16. ^c7 : 44 ; 19 : 64; 52 : 18-20. ^d52 : 23; 55 : 53; 77 : 43.

^e7 : 41; 20 : 75. ^f2 : 87; 40 : 50-51.

3687. Important Words :

تَجَبَّرُونَ (you will be honoured and made happy) is derived from جَبَر . They say جَبَر الشَّيْءُ i.e. he made the thing beautiful or adorned it or embellished it and made it plain. أَجْبَرَهُ and جَبَرَهُ means, he or it made him happy; he made him to enjoy a state of ease and plenty; he treated him with honour or with extraordinary honour. أَجْبَرَتِ الْأَرْضُ means, the herbage of the earth grew large or plentiful (Lane & Aqrab).

3688. Commentary :

What a beautiful description of the "Garden" which the righteous servants of God will inherit. As contrasted with this blissful condition of the God-fearing, the terrible agony of the sinful and the guilty is described in the next few verses (vv. 75-79).

3689. Important Words :

For فُتِرَ see 5 : 20 and for مُبْلِسُونَ , 2: 35.

78. And they will cry: 'O Mālik! let thy Lord have done with us.' He will say, 'You must remain *here*.'³⁶⁹⁰

79. God will say: 'We certainly brought you the truth; but most of you were averse to the truth.'

80. Have they determined upon a course? Then We *too* are determined.³⁶⁹¹

81. Do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? Yea! "And Our messengers remain with them recording *everything*."

82. Say, ^b"If the Gracious God had a son, I would have been the first of worshippers."³⁶⁹²

وَنَادُوا إِلَيْكَ لِيَقْضَ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَكْتُومُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كُرْهُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

أَمْ أَمْرُكُمْ أَمْ فَإِنَّا مَبْرُؤُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلْ

وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

قُلْ إِن كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعِبَادِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

^a50 : 19; 82 : 11-12. ^b2 : 117; 10 : 69; 17 : 112; 18 : 5; 19 : 89.

3690. Commentary :

مالك literally meaning master, is generally considered to be the angel in charge of Hell.

3691. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the plans and plots of disbelievers against Islam are doomed to end in failure. While on the one hand disbelievers are leaving no stone unturned to bring to naught the endeavours of the Holy Prophet and his followers to preach and spread Islam; on the other the Almighty has decreed that it shall grow and prosper in the teeth of determined opposition.

3592. Important Words :

عابدين is the plural of عابد which is active participle from عبد ('abada) which means, he worshipped. It is also derived from عبد ('abida). They say عبد عليه i.e. he was angry with him. عبد ('abida) also means, he disdained or scorned, he denied, disacknowledged or disallowed; he repented and blamed himself

for having been remiss; he mourned, grieved or was sorrowful; he was covetous (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

Commentary :

In view of the different meanings of the word عبد given above, the verse may have one of the following interpretations :

- (a) If the Gracious God had a son, I would have been the first to worship him (the son) because, being God's most obedient and faithful servant, I would not have been remiss in my duty to him (the son).
- (b) If it could be possible that the Gracious God should have a son, I am most entitled to this position because I have worshipped God most and have served Him most.
- (c) The Gracious God certainly has no son (لَنْ meaning "not") and I am the first

83. Holy is *Allah*, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, *far above* that which they attribute to Him.³⁶⁹³

سُبْحَنَ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ
عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. So "leave them alone to indulge in vain discourse and to amuse themselves until they meet that Day of theirs which they have been promised.

فَذَرُهُمْ يُخَوِّضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى يُلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي
يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And ^bHe it is Who is God in heaven, and God on earth; and He is the Wise, the All-Knowing.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌُ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌُ وَ
هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And blessed is He ^cto Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, and to Him shall you be brought back.³⁶⁹⁴

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ
مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَالَّذِي تَرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. And ^dthose on whom they call beside Him possess no power of intercession but he who bears witness to the truth, and they know *him*.³⁶⁹⁵

وَلَا يَبْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ
إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

^a23 : 55; 52 : 46 : 70 : 43.

^b6 : 4.

^c2 : 108; 7 : 159; 57 : 6.

^d19 : 88.

to bear witness to this fact (the word *الشاهدين* signifying *العابدين* i.e. witnesses).

(d) The Gracious God has no son and I am the first disdainful denier of the assertion that He has one.

3693. Commentary :

The verse gives two very strong arguments to support the doctrine of the Unity of God: (a) Allah is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. (b) He is the Lord of the Throne. The possession of these attributes by God fully

negatives the need of having a son. If God could create the whole universe and could govern and control it alone, what need had He to have a son? See also 2 : 117-118.

3694. Commentary :

The words "and with Him is the knowledge of the Hour" embody another argument in repudiation of Jesus's "sonship". Here God is said to possess the knowledge of the Hour but Jesus confessed his ignorance of it (Matt. 24 : 36).

3695. Commentary :

The reference in the words "who bears witness to the truth" seems to be to the Holy Prophet.

88. And "if thou ask them, 'Who created them?' they will surely say, 'Allah.' How then are they being turned away?

وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَلَيْ
يُؤْفَكُونَ ۝٨٨

89. I swear by his repeated cry, 'O my Lord! ^bthese are a people who will not believe.'³⁶⁹⁶

وَقِيلَ لَهُ يَرْبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝٨٩

90. Therefore, turn aside from them, and say, 'Peace'; and soon shall they know.³⁶⁹⁷

فَاَصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٩٠

^a29 : 62; 31 : 26; 39 : 39.

^b84 : 21.

3696. Commentary :

There could be no greater testimony to the Holy Prophet's solicitude and concern for the spiritual well-being of his people than the fact that God Himself should swear by it as He has done in this verse. The Holy Prophet's grief over the denial by his people of the Message of Islam and their opposition to it was so deep and agonizing that it had almost killed him. The Qur'ān feelingly testifies to the Holy Prophet's grief in the words: *So haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death for sorrow after them if they believe not in this discourse* (18 : 7).

3697. Commentary :

In the words "say, 'Peace'" the Holy Prophet is consoled and comforted that though he is now being opposed and persecuted, yet the time was fast approaching when his enemies would come under his power and Islam would spread all over Arabia and peace would reign throughout the land. When that time comes he should forgive his enemies and give them security. This prophecy was fulfilled at the Fall of Mecca when the Holy Prophet forgave his enemies with a magnanimity which has no parallel in history.

CHAPTER 44

AL-DUKHĀN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks

This is decidedly a Meccan *Sūra*. All authorities including Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair agree on this point. It belongs to the Middle Meccan period. Noldeke assigns its revelation to the sixth or seventh year of the Call. It has 60 verses including *Bismillah*, and takes its name from v. 11.

Connection with the Preceding *Sūra*

In its closing verses the previous *Sūra* had made a pathetic reference to the agonised outpourings of the Holy Prophet's lacerated heart, that in spite of his best efforts his Message had failed to evoke adequate response in his people. In answer to his cries of agony, the Prophet was told to overlook their faults and invoke God's mercy on them, for thus his prayer would draw Divine grace and would make them realise their mistake and listen to him. In the present *Sūra* we are told that the Qur'ān which fully explains the truths and realities of life has been revealed by God, the Lord of all Honour and Praise, and that it has been revealed in a period of spiritual darkness, which nevertheless is blessed. It will lead people to the right path. The revelation of the Qur'ān is in accordance with the invariable practice and unalterable decree of God, that when mankind gropes in the Cimmerian darkness of moral turpitude, God raises a Messenger to guide and reform them. He has now sent the Holy Prophet that he might reclaim mankind from sin and evil.

Summary

The *Sūra* is the fifth of the Ḥā Mīm group. Like its predecessors it opens with the subject of revelation of the Qur'ān, though in a different form and context. It commences with the theme that whenever darkness enshrouds the face of the earth, and humanity is stuck fast in the quagmire of moral turpitude, God raises a Messenger and gives him a new Message to reclaim and regenerate the world. Prophets of God had been appearing at such decadent times, and now that moral need of humanity was the greatest and spiritual darkness was most intense and overwhelming, God has raised the greatest of His Messengers and has given him the last and most perfect Law—the Qur'ān. This dark period in which the Holy Prophet has made his appearance has been called the blessed night, humanity's "Night of Destiny." In it the foundations of man's moral and spiritual future have been laid for all time to come. The advent of the Holy Prophet is indeed a great mercy of God. God has raised the Holy Prophet to give new life to a spiritually dead world. But, alas!

those for whose spiritual resurrection he has been raised, doubt and deny his Message and oppose him. The Holy Prophet is told to wait till as a punishment for their sins his people are visited with a severe famine which will overwhelm Mecca and the surrounding country. And if they did not benefit from this punishment and did not repent, they will be seized with a severer affliction.

The *Sūra* goes on to say that the advent of the Holy Prophet is not a novel phenomenon. Divine Messengers had appeared before him in the fulness of time, most prominent among them being Moses, who was raised to deliver the Israelites from servitude under Pharaoh, who threatened to kill him. Moses prayed to God to save him from Pharaoh and his cohorts. He was commanded by God to leave Egypt with the Israelites in the stillness of night and cross the sea at a time when it was calm, going over the dunes. Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his mighty hosts but was drowned in the sea.

The *Sūra* then gives a pathetic description of the dreadful fate that overtook Pharaoh and his people. "How many were the gardens," it says, "and the springs that they left behind, and the cornfields, and noble places and the comforts wherein they took delight." They were made to give up all these things of which another people took possession, and they went to their doom in disgrace and ignominy. Such was the terrible end to which Pharaoh and his people came. As against this, not only were the Israelites saved but God chose them for the bestowal of His special favours and blessings, and then in order to test their faith made them pass through severe trials and tribulations. This is how God brings about great transformation in the life of a people through a Prophet. The Prophet gives them new life after they are dead, morally and spiritually; and yet these people—the Meccans—say that once they are dead they will not be raised to new life. They are warned that if, in spite of the many Signs they have witnessed, they persisted in rejecting the Divine Messenger, they will meet with no better fate than that which overtook the opponents of the Prophets of yore.

Next, the *Sūra* says, that God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, in sport. It is not for nothing that man came upon this earth. The be-all and end-all of his existence is not to eat, drink and be merry. Life has a great mission. It is for the fulfilment of this great mission that God sends His Messengers to the world. They lead man to God. But the evil-minded men do not believe in them. They reject their teachings and oppose and persecute them, and at last there comes the Day of Decision, when those who reject them make themselves the object of God's wrath and those who give their allegiance to them deserve Divine favours and blessings. The *Sūra* proceeds to give a graphic description of the punishment that will be meted out to the sinful, and of the gifts that will be bestowed upon the righteous. The former will be given the tree of *Zaqqūm* to eat which, like molten copper will boil in their bellies. They will be seized and dragged into the blazing fire of Hell and boiling water will be poured on their heads. On the other hand, the righteous will be made to live in places of honour and security amid gardens and springs. They will be given raiments of silk to wear, and will sit on thrones, facing each other. They will be given all sorts of fruits to eat and will enjoy the company of righteous and faithful consorts.

In fact, they will achieve the supreme object of their creation, *i.e.*, God's love and pleasure. All this they will get through the grace of God.

The *Sūra* ends on the note that the principles and ideals of Islam have been taught in a most clear and convincing manner and yet if disbelievers refuse to accept the new Faith, let them wait till God gives His decision and the matter is settled.

سُورَةُ الدُّخَانِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٣)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁶⁹⁸

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bHā Mīm.³⁶⁹⁹

حَمْدٌ ②

3. By this perspicuous Book.³⁷⁰⁰

وَالْكِتَابِ الْبَيِّنِ ③

4. Truly, "We revealed it in a blessed night. Truly, We have ever been warning against evil."³⁷⁰¹

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ ④

5. ^aIn it all wise things are decided.³⁷⁰²

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ⑤

6. By Our own command. Verily, We have ever been sending Messengers,

أَمْراً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ⑥

^aSee 1 : 1.

^b40 : 2.

^c97 : 2.

^d97 : 5.

3698. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

3699. **Commentary :**

See 40 : 2.

3700. **Commentary :**

See 26 : 3 ; 27 : 2 and 28 : 3.

3701. **Commentary :**

In this verse the Qur'ān is stated to have been revealed in the blessed night which elsewhere is called ليلة القدر i.e. the "Night of Destiny" (97 : 2). According to authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet, the "Night of Destiny" falls in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, the month in which the Qur'ān began to be revealed (2 : 186), to be exact, on its 24th night (Musnad & Jarīr). The blessed night, or the "Night of Destiny," is the Quranic metaphor for a period of time when spiritual darkness enshrouds the entire face of

the earth and mankind wallows in the quagmire of sin and iniquity. It is then that a Divine Reformer is raised to reclaim and regenerate corrupt humanity. The night which gave to humanity its greatest Teacher and the last and most perfect Divine Law, was indeed a "Night of Destiny" for it. The blessed night or the "Night of Destiny" may also be taken as covering the whole period in which the Qur'ān continued to be revealed.

3702. **Commentary :**

The "Night of Destiny" or the time of the advent of a great Divine Reformer heralds a new era, a new order of things, when, in fact, the future of humanity is decreed and decided. The time when the Qur'ān was revealed was humanity's greatest "Night of Destiny," for it was then that the foundations were laid of man's destiny for all time to come.

7. As a mercy from thy Lord. Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing,³⁷⁰³

8. "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you would *only* have faith."³⁷⁰⁴

9. There is no God but He. ^bHe gives life and He causes death. He is your Lord, and the Lord of your forefathers.

10. Yet they play about in doubt.

11. But watch thou for the day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke,³⁷⁰⁵

رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ٥

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ كُنُتُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِينَ ٨

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ٩

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ ١٠

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ١١

^a19 : 66; 37 : 6; 44 : 8; 78 : 38. ^b7 : 159; 10 : 57; 57 : 3.

3703. Commentary :

The advent of a Divine Reformer or of a new revelation is indeed a great mercy of God to mankind. It seems that a Prophet or a Divine Reformer comes in response to the agonised cries of the righteous men of the time that God might raise one who should call and lead erring humanity to the way of righteousness; and God does raise a Prophet or a Divine Reformer in the fulness of time. Being All-Knowing, He knows full well when the spiritual needs of mankind call for the appearance of a Prophet.

3704. Commentary :

The verse points to the object of the appearance of a Divine Reformer which is to call men to God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who gives life and causes death.

3705. Important Words :

For دُخَان (smoke) see 41 : 12.

Commentary :

The reference in the verse may be to the severe famine that overtook Mecca and lasted for several years till Abu-Sufyān, then a great leader of disbelief, came to the Holy Prophet and begged him to pray for deliverance from the scourge. The famine is said to have been so severe that the Meccans ate hides, bones and even dead bodies (Bukhārī, *Abwāb al-Istisqā*). The famine has been described by the word دُخَان (smoke) because, as the tradition goes, the hunger was so severe that people felt a sort of smoke hanging before their eyes. Or the word may have been used because there was no rain for a long time in Mecca, and the whole atmosphere had become dusty, for دُخَان also means dust.

The verse may also be taken as referring to the last two world wars in which towns and cities were burnt down to rubble and the smoke that rose from their ruins filled the whole atmosphere with smoke and dust.

12. That will envelop the people.
This will be a painful torment.

يَغْشَى النَّاسُ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ١٢

13. *On seeing it the people will cry,*
“Our Lord, remove from us the
torment; truly, we are believers.”

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ ١٣

14. How can they benefit by
admonition, when there has already
come to them a Messenger, explaining
things clearly, ³⁷⁰⁶

أَنَّى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَى وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ ١٤

15. And yet they turned away from
him and said: ‘*He is* ^b*tutored, a man*
possessed?’

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَجْنُونٌ ١٥

16. “We shall remove the punish-
ment for a little while, *but* you will
certainly revert to *disbelief*.³⁷⁰⁷

إِنَّا كَاشِفُو الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ ١٦

17. On the day when We shall
seize *you* with the great seizure, *you*
will know that We will certainly
exact retribution. ³⁷⁰⁸

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَى إِنَّا مُنتَقِمُونَ ١٧

18. And We tried the people of
Pharaoh before them, and there came
to them a noble Messenger,

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ
كَرِيمٌ ١٨

^a7 : 135; 43 : 51.

^b15 : 7; 37 : 37; 68 : 52.

^c7 : 136; 43 : 51.

3706. Commentary :

The verse means to say that, now that the Meccans have been visited with Divine punishment, they cry that if it is removed, they would repent and reform. Their present show of humility, however, is only a temporary phase. There has come to them a great Prophet, whose whole life lay before them like an open book. They knew that he was honest, sincere, truthful and trusty. Yet they rejected such a paragon of truth and righteousness. What trust could then be placed in their word?

3707. Commentary :

According to reliable tradition the Holy Prophet prayed and the famine was removed. But the Quraish did not benefit by it and continued to oppose Islam.

3708. Commentary :

The “great seizure” may refer to the defeat of the Quraish at the Battle of Badr or to the Fall of Mecca when all their glory departed and their pride was humbled in the dust. They came to the Holy Prophet (whom they had hounded out of Mecca only eight years before) begging for mercy.

19. *Saying*, 'Deliver to me the servants of Allah. Truly, I am to you a Messenger, faithful to my trust;³⁷⁰⁹

20. 'And exalt not yourselves in defiance of Allah. Surely, I come to you with a clear authority.

21. "And I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me.³⁷¹⁰

22. 'And if you believe me not, then leave me alone.'

23. Then he prayed unto his Lord, *saying*, 'These are indeed a sinful people.'

24. *God said*, 'Take My servants away by night; ^bfor you will surely be pursued.

25. 'And leave thou the sea *behind* when it is motionless, *crossing over the dunes*. Surely, they are a host that are *doomed* to be drowned.³⁷¹¹

أَنْ أَدُّوْا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ۝١٩

وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ ۝٢٠

وَإِنِّي عَذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ ۝٢١

وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَوْمِنُوا لِي فَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ ۝٢٢

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ ۝٢٣

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُونَ ۝٢٤

وَاتْرِكِ الْبَـحْرَ رَهْوَ إِنْهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُونَ ۝٢٥

^a40 : 281

^b10 : 91; 20 : 79; 26 : 61.

3709. Important words :

أدوا (deliver) is formed from أدى . They say أداه *i.e.* he paid it, conveyed it or delivered it (Lane).

3710. Important Words :

ترجمون (you stone me) is formed from رجم . They say رجمه *i.e.* he threw stones at him; he stoned him to death, he cursed him or reviled him; he cut off all friendly intercourse with him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 37.

3711. Important Words :

رها (motionless) is derived from رها . They say رها بين رجليه *i.e.* he parted his legs and made an opening between them. رها البحر means, the sea became still and calm. رها الطائر means, the bird

spread its wings. رها means, an intervening space between two things; a depressed place where water collects or stagnates; an elevated place; a way through a market-place, at the sides of which sit the sellers; a well wide in the mouth; quick or swift; still, quiet or motionless; a company of men following one another (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

When Moses and the Israelites arrived at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the ebb of the tide had begun. As the water receded it left dunes, the tops of which were gradually uncovered, leaving the intervening depressions full of water. The Israelites crossed over at that moment.

26. How many were the gardens and the springs that they left *behind*!

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۝٢٦

27. And the cornfields and "the noble places!"

وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ۝٢٧

28. And the comforts wherein they took delight!³⁷¹²

وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فُلْهينَ ۝٢٨

29. Thus *it was destined to be*.^b And We made another people inherit these things.

كَذَلِكَ تَفْثَا وَآوَرْنَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ۝٢٩

30. And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they respited.³⁷¹³

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا

مُنْظَرِينَ ۝٣٠

٢. 2 31. ^cAnd We delivered the Children of Israel from the abasing torment³⁷¹⁴

وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْبَهِينِ ۝٣١

32. *Inflicted* by Pharaoh; he was surely haughty *even* among the extravagant.

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِنَ السُّرِفِينَ ۝٣٢

^a26 : 59. ^b7 : 138; 26 : 60; 28 : 7. ^c2 : 50; 14 : 7 ; 20 : 81.

For a detailed description as to how Moses passed through the sea while Pharaoh and his mighty hosts were drowned, see 20 : 78 and 26 : 64.

3712. Commentary :

What a graphic picture of the great material blessings which the people of Pharaoh had enjoyed!

3713. Commentary :

Mark the pathos of these words! The ill-fated people of Pharaoh enjoyed all sorts of comforts and luxury. They had wealth, power and influence. A Prophet came to them. They rejected his Message and opposed his mission with the result that heavenly punishment came down upon them sudden and swift

and they went to their doom unwept, un-honoured and unsung. The ill-fated monarch who, in his conceit and arrogance, called himself God, went to the depths of the sea (20 : 79), with the memorable words, "I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the Children of Israel believed," on his lips. He who wanted to have a peep at the God of Moses in the heavens (40 : 38) had a taste of His might in the depths of the sea.

3714. Commentary :

God delivered the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh whom the possession of great wealth, power and influence had made so proud and conceited that he rejected the Divine Message with disdain and contempt.

33. And We chose them knowingly above the peoples of *their time*.³⁷¹⁵

وَلَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And We gave them Signs wherein was a clear trial.

وَاتَيْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. These *people* do say:

إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. "It is but our first *and only* death, *after which there is no life* and we shall not be raised again."³⁷¹⁶

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِنَبْشَرِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. 'So bring *back* our fathers, if you speak the truth.'

فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them because they were sinful.³⁷¹⁷

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. ^bAnd We created not the heaven and the earth, and all that is between them, in sport.³⁷¹⁸

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَٰعِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

^a6 : 30; 23 : 38; 37 : 60; 45 : 25.

^b21 : 17; 38 : 28.,

3715. Commentary :

God selected the Israelites for His favours because in the Divine scheme of things, they were found to be most suited for carrying on the Divine mission at that time.

3716. Commentary :

The verse means to say that knowing that the Israelites were raised from the bondage of sin and servitude to moral and political eminence, the disbelievers have the hardihood to deny the great life-giving power of God, and to maintain that once they are dead, they are dead for ever, and will never be raised again.

3717. Commentary :

Tubba' is said to be the royal title of the kings of Himyar in Yemen. The Kings of Yemen were only known by this title when they also held

sway over Himyar, Hadarmaut and Saba'. From ancient inscriptions it appears that the Tubbas ruled over these territories from 270 A.D. to 525 A.D. Historical annals speak of their great glory and despotism. They seemed to have extended their rule over all Arabia, even to East Africa (Enc. of Islam). The particular Tubba' referred to in the verse under comment, is mentioned in some traditions as a Prophet of God. The Qur'ān seems to support this view (50 : 15).

3718. Commentary :

Human life has a grim purpose and a great mission. The faculties and inborn powers of man are an indication that life is real and earnest. It is to this great principle that the creation of the heavens and the earth emphatically draws our attention.

40. We created them not but for an eternal purpose, but most of them understand not.

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. Verily, the Day of Decision is the appointed time for all of them,³⁷¹⁹

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْقَضَاءِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

42. "The Day when a friend shall not avail a friend at all, nor shall they be helped,

يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَوْلَى عَنْ مَوْلَى شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. Save those to whom Allah shows mercy. Surely, He is the Mighty, the Merciful.³⁷²⁰

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٣﴾

3 44. Verily, ^bthe tree of Zaqqūm³⁷²¹

إِنَّ شَجَرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Will be the food of the sinful,

طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Like molten copper, ^cit will boil in *their* bellies³⁷²²

كَالْهَمَلِ يَغْلَى فِي الْبُطُونِ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. As the boiling of scalding water.

كَغَلَى الْحَيْمِ ﴿٤٧﴾

^a2 : 124; 70 : 11; 80 : 35-37. ^b37 : 63; 56 : 53. ^c22 : 21.

3719. Commentary :

Besides the final Day of Decision when all secrets of the unknown will be laid bare and human actions weighed in the balance and finally judged, there is a day of decision in the time of every Prophet in this very life when truth triumphs and falsehood is defeated. The reference in the verse is to both these Days of Decision.

3720. Commentary :

Elsewhere the Qur'ān says: "There is no shelter for anyone this day from the decree of Allah excepting those to whom He shows mercy" (11 : 44). It is one of the basic principles of Islam that salvation depends upon the grace and mercy of God.

3721. Commentary :

In this and several succeeding verses a description is given of the consequences of rejection of the Divine Message and of its acceptance, as unfolded in this and the next world. The description given is in terms of physical representation of the condition of dwellers of Hell and that of the inmates of Paradise.

3722. Important Words :

يغلى (will boil) is aorist from غلى. They say غلى الرجل *i.e.* the cooking-pot boiled. غلى means, the man became vehemently angry. When said of liquor, غلى means, it fermented, it effervesced (Lane).

48. *We shall say to the angels, 'Seize him and drag him into the midst of the blazing Fire;*³⁷²³

49. *'Then "pour upon his head the torment of boiling water.'*

50. *'Taste it! Thou didst consider thyself the mighty, the noble.*³⁷²⁴

51. *'This indeed is what you did doubt.'*

52. *Verily, "the righteous will be in a place of security.*³⁷²⁵

53. *"Amid gardens and springs,*

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتَلُوهُ إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ۖ

ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ۖ

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ۖ

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ ۖ

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ۖ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۖ

^a22 : 20; 55 : 45; 56 : 43. ^b30 : 116; 52 : 18; 78 : 32. ^c68 : 35 : 78 : 33.

3723. Important Words :

اعتلوه (drag him) is imperative mood from عتل. They say عتله *i.e.* he drew him along or dragged him roughly or violently; he pushed him or thrust him roughly and violently. عتل الشيء means, he carried the thing. عتل الى الشيء ('atila) means, he hastened to do an evil deed (Lane & Aqrab).

3724. Commentary :

False pride and foolish self-conceit are at the root of the disbelievers' denial of God's Prophets. To this fact reference has been made again and again in the Qur'ān (43:32, 52,53, etc.). The first recorded denial of a Prophet of God (Adam) was due to pride and arrogance on the part of Iblīs (2 : 35). The verse under comment means to say that disbelievers will be given *zaqqūm* (زقوم) to eat and thus their pride will be humbled, as it was their arrogance and pride that

stood in the way of their accepting the truth. The word زقوم has been considered by some to be an abbreviation, standing for the meaning and content of the verse. The words of the verse have been spoken in irony and disdain.

3725. Commentary :

The righteous were oppressed and persecuted and were denied safety and security in this world for having accepted the Divine Message. In the next world they will enjoy perfect peace, safety and security as recompense for having been denied these blessings in the present life. The verse may also constitute a prophecy. The Companions of the Holy Prophet were oppressed and persecuted for many years. They are told that the time was fast approaching when they will enjoy security and will have all those blessings and boons that are mentioned in the succeeding verses.

54. ^aAttired in fine silk and heavy brocade, facing one another.³⁷²⁶

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

55. Thus *will it be*. And ^bWe shall give them as companions fair maidens, having wide, black eyes.³⁷²⁷

كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

56. They will call therein for ^cevery kind of fruit, in *peace and security*.

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

57. They will not taste death therein, save the first death. ^dAnd He will save them from the punishment of the blazing Fire,³⁷²⁸

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ وَوَقَّعَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾

58. *As an act of grace from thy Lord.* ^eThat is the supreme triumph.³⁷²⁹

فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٥٧﴾

^a18 : 32; 76 : 22. ^b52 : 12; 56 : 23. ^c52 : 19; 55 : 53; 56 : 21. ^d52 : 28. ^e37 : 61.

3726. Important Words :

For سندس and إستبرق see 18 : 32.

3727. Important Words :

حور (fair maidens) is the plural of حوراء which is derived from حار. The say حار الثوب i.e. he washed the cloth and made it white. حورت العين means, whiteness of the white of the eye and blackness of the black thereof became intense. حوراء means, a woman having eyes like those of gazelles or combining intense whiteness of the white of the eye and intense blackness of the black thereof with whiteness or fairness of

complexion (Lane and Aqrab). See also 3 : 53.

عين (having wide eyes) is the plural of عينا, which means, a beautiful woman having wide, black eyes. See also 37 : 49.

3728. Commentary :

The verse unmistakably shows that life in the next world would be eternal and continuously progressive; not a life of inaction or lassitude.

3729. Commentary :

The *Sūra* ends with the enunciation of the basic doctrine of Islam that salvation depends on the grace and mercy of God.

59. "And We have made it (the Qur'ān) easy in thy tongue that they may give heed.

60. So wait thou; they *too* are waiting.³⁷³⁰

فَاتَّبَعْنَاهُ بِلسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

فَارْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُمْ مُرْتَقِبُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

19 : 89; 54 : 18.

3730. Commentary :

Twice in this brief *Sūra* the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to wait. The *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca. This shows that the Holy Prophet was to wait for some time before Divine punishment was to overtake the Quraish. The

Muslims had to wait for 14 long years before heavenly punishment visited their persecutors and tormentors in the form of the latter's ignominious defeat at Badr. The God of Islam is a Merciful and Compassionate God. He is quick to forgive and slow to punish.

CHAPTER 45

AL-JĀTHIYAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks and Context

This is the sixth of the seven *Sūrās* belonging to the Ḥā Mīm group. Like other *Sūrās* of this group, it was revealed at Mecca. But no exact date can be assigned to its revelation though Noldeke places it immediately after the 41st Chapter. Naturally, it differs little in its subject-matter from other *Sūrās* of this group. It derives its title from verse 29.

Towards the close of the preceding *Sūra* it was stated that righteous believers will reside in places of security where every kind of comfort will be at their disposal and they will enjoy eternal life, immune from death or degradation. The present *Sūra* opens with the statement that just as timely rain gives new life to dead earth, similarly a Divine Prophet is raised when men become morally corrupt. As men had become corrupt; so God has raised the Holy Prophet Muḥammad to regenerate them. He is a true Messenger of God and not a liar or a sinful forger of lies.

Summary of Subject-Matter

Like the preceding five *Sūrās* of the Ḥā Mīm group the present *Sūra* also opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and Divine Unity which constitutes its main theme, and adduces the creation of man and all animal and vegetable life on earth, the coming down of timely rain from the clouds which quickens the dead earth, the marvellous creation of the universe and the complete and consummate design and order that pervade and permeate it, as great Signs to establish the existence of an unerring and All-Powerful Being behind all this and proceeds to invite disbelievers to consider, how the Wise Being Who has made such wonderful provision for man's short and temporary life on earth, could have failed to make similar provision for his eternal life. This provision for man's spiritual sustenance has been made in the revelation that descends upon God's Messengers to lead him to the achievement of the goal of his life. The *Sūra* then goes on to say that God does not allow the arrangement which He has made for the moral and spiritual regeneration of man to be interfered with. He does not allow a forger of lies to prosper. Sooner or later the impostor must come to grief. But the Holy Prophet's mission is making uniform progress. This is proof positive of the fact that he is not a liar but a true Messenger of God. If, in spite of such patent and invincible proofs, disbelievers proudly persist in their disbelief, they are warned that their rejection of truth will not go unpunished.

The *Sūra* then gives one more very cogent argument to prove and substantiate the claim of the Holy Prophet, viz., that all the forces of nature are working to support and further his cause. It is, therefore, bound to succeed, and the day is fast approaching when the powerful persecutors of helpless Muslims will suffer defeat and will be at the mercy of their victims. This fact will then constitute another proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet. Next, the Muslims are told that in the hour of victory and triumph they should forgive and forget and be merciful and generous to their opponents. Again, a brief reference is made to the Mosaic Dispensation. It is stated that the Qur'ān has been revealed because the Torah failed to satisfy fully the spiritual needs of man. It also fulfils the prophecies made in the Torah about the advent of a Prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites (Deut. 18:18). All these facts have been stated for the guidance of honest seekers after truth.

The *Sūra* further tells disbelievers that God, the Author of all life, is a Wise God. He has created man to serve a very great and noble object. If man's life had no purpose, God would not have created him, and if death were the end of all life, the Wise Creator would be regarded as having done a purposeless thing by creating this vast universe. But God is far above all this. He has created man to achieve a noble goal. A better and fuller life which knows no end awaits him in the next world. It is only in this way that the creation of man can be justified. The disbelievers labour under a serious misapprehension, if they think that with the dissolution of man's physical habitat his soul also dies and there is an end of him.

The *Sūra* closes with a brief but very effective description of the Day of Judgment. Every people, it says, will be summoned to render an account of their actions. Their eyes, ears and other organs of the body will bear witness for or against them. Those who believed in God's Messengers and did good works will be admitted into God's mercy while evil consequences of the wicked deeds of those who rejected God's Messengers and opposed and oppressed them will be made manifest to them and they will incur God's wrath and burn in the fire of His displeasure. That will be the last Judgment Day. But even before that day disbelievers will have to give an explanation, in this very life, as to why they disobeyed and defied the Prophets of God. They are further warned that if they did not repent and mend their ways, they will be doomed to a life of failure and frustration. But the righteous servants of God will meet with success and prosperity, and this triumph of truth over falsehood will establish that "All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of all the worlds; His is the Majesty in the heavens; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

سُورَةُ الْجَاثِيَةِ مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٥)

1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.³⁷³¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

2. ^bHā Mīm.³⁷³²

حَمْزٌ ②

3. "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.³⁷³³

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ③

4. ^dVerily, in the heavens and the earth are Signs for those who believe.³⁷³⁴

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ④

5. And in your own creation and in that of all the creatures which He scatters in the earth are Signs for a people who possess firm faith.^{3734A}

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ⑤

^aSee 1 : 1. ^b41 : 2. ^c32 : 3; 36 : 6; 40 : 3; 41 : 3. ^d2 : 165; 42 : 30.

3731. **Commentary :**

See 1 : 1.

3732. **Commentary :**

See 40 : 2.

3733. **Commentary :**

See 42 : 4.

3734. **Commentary :**

Like the preceding five Chapters which have the abbreviated letters Hā Mīm placed in their beginning, the present *Sūra* opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and with its principal theme—the Unity of God. In this and the next two verses the creation of heavens and the earth, the beautiful and perfect design and order that exist in the universe, the creation of man and all the creatures that have been created on earth for his use and service, and that of the whole solar system, have been adduced as arguments to prove that there must be, and actually is,

an All-Powerful and All-Knowing Being Who has created this universe and Who is controlling it. And then in the words, *and the provision that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He quickens the earth after its death*, the *Sūra* proceeds to dwell upon the need and necessity of Divine revelation. The verse purports to say that when God has made such ample and complete provision for the physical needs and requirements of man as to have created heavens and earth and the whole universe for his benefit. He could not have neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs, and just as rain is sent down from the clouds to give new life to dead earth, similarly Divine revelation is sent down from heaven for the spiritual regeneration and resuscitation of mankind.

3734A. **Commentary :**

See preceding verse.

6. And *in* "the alternation of night and day, and the provision that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby ^bHe quickens the earth after its death, and *in* the changing of the winds, are Signs for a people who *try to* understand."³⁷³⁵

7. These are the Signs of Allah which We rehearse unto thee with truth. In what word, then, after *rejecting the Word of Allah* and His Signs, will they believe?³⁷³⁶

8. Woe to every sinful liar,³⁷³⁷

وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ

مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ

الرَّيْحِ آيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦﴾

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ

بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧﴾

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٨﴾

^a2 : 165; 3 : 191; 10 : 7.

^b16 : 66; 22 : 6; 30 : 51; 35 : 28; 39 : 22.

3735. Commentary :

This verse further says that as light follows darkness, similarly when spiritual darkness spreads over the entire earth, God creates new light in the form of a Prophet or Divine Reformer to whom He reveals Himself. And just as winds carry pollen from male to female trees in order to fecundate them, in the same way the spiritually elevating ideas that emanate from a Divine Reformer impregnate the minds of men and bring about spiritual revolution in them.

3736. Important Words :

بعده (after) has a variety of meanings, some of which are: after or afterwards; behind; before; yet; now; in spite of; contrary to or against; in addition to, or furthermore (Lane & Aqrab).

حديث (word) means, a piece of information; an announcement; an important news; an account; a narration; a tradition; a thing or matter that is talked of; any discourse that one hears (Lane & Aqrab). See also 4 : 43.

Commentary :

In view of different meanings of the words ^جبعده and ^جحديث given above under Important Words, the expression ^جبعده يؤمنون would mean:

(i) In what word or discourse, after rejecting the Word of Allah and after rejecting His Signs, will they believe?

(ii) In what word, contrary to the Word of Allah and His Signs, will they believe?

(iii) In what word, after the Word of Allah and His Signs have come, will they believe?

(iv) In spite of the fact that the Word of God and His Signs have come to them, they do not believe in them. Then in what else would they believe?

3737. Commentary :

Evidently a man who rejects clear Signs of God is a forger and teller of lies and a committer of abominations and, therefore, legitimately deserves a painful punishment.

9. Who hears the Signs of Allah recited unto him, and then proudly persists in *his disbelief*, as though he heard them not. So give him the tidings of a painful punishment.

10. And when he learns something of Our Signs, ^ahe makes a jest of them. For such there is an abasing punishment.

11. ^bBefore them is Hell; and that which they have earned shall not avail them aught, nor shall those whom they have taken for protectors beside Allah. And they will have a great punishment.³⁷³⁸

12. This is *true* guidance. ^cAnd for those who disbelieve in the Signs of their Lord is the torture of a painful punishment.

R. 2 13. Allah it is ^dWho has subjected the sea to you that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.

14. ^eAnd He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all *this is* from Him. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.³⁷³⁹

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَانُ

لَمْ يَسْعَهَا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ①

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ②

مِنْ دَرَأِيهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوا

شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَهُمْ

عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ③

هَٰذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

مِنْ رَجْزِ أَلِيمٍ ④

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ

وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ⑤

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ⑥

^a2 : 232; 31 : 7.

^b14 : 17-18.

^c2 : 40; 22 : 58.

^d16 : 15 ; 17 : 67; 30 : 47; 31 : 32; 35 : 13.

^e22 : 66.

3738. Commentary :

The verse means to say that the Unity of God, for the establishment of which Divine Scriptures have been revealed and Prophets raised, is the quintessence of Divine guidance and those who reject and deny it are bound to meet with a sad fate.

3739. Commentary :

In vv. 4, 5 and 6 one kind of argument, viz. the creation of man and all life on earth, and the alternation of day and night, had been given to prove the existence, the Almightyness and the Unity of God. The present vers

15. Say to those who believe that they forgive those who *persecute them* and fear not the Days of Allah, that He may requite a people for what they earn.³⁷⁴⁰

16. "Whoso does good, does it for his own soul; and whoso does wrong, does so to its detriment. Then to your Lord will you *all* be brought back.

17. And verily, ^bWe gave the Children of Israel the Book, and sovereignty, and prophethood; and ^cWe provided them with *good and pure things*, and We exalted them over the peoples *of the time*.³⁷⁴¹

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ
لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ⑤

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ⑥

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالتَّوْبَةَ
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ⑦

^a6 : 161; 29 : 7.

^b6 : 90.

^c10 : 94.

gives another kind of argument to prove the same thesis. *viz.*, that the whole universe has been created to serve man. See also 2 : 165.

3740. Important Words :

لا يرجون (fear not) is formed from رجا , They say رجا الشيء *i.e.* he hoped to get the thing; he feared the thing. The word رجا is used in the sense of hoping to get a thing when the thing hoped for is good and pleasant and fearing a thing that should be feared (Aqrab & Mufradā'). See also 10 : 8.

ايام الله (days of Allah) means, the favours and punishment of God (Aqrab). See also 14 : 6.

Commentary :

The Sūra under comment was revealed at Mecca in the early period of the Holy Prophet's ministry when Islam was in a very weak state and Muslims were being persecuted. It was at that time that Muslims were enjoined to forgive those who persecuted them and who did not fear the punishment of God. The verse

clearly embodied a great prophecy that the time was fast approaching when the persecutors of the poor and defenceless Muslims would be at the latter's mercy. So Muslims were told in advance that in such an eventuality they should forgive their persecutors and forget the wrongs done to them, and leave them to God to deal with them as He, in His infallible wisdom, deemed fit.

The words ايام الله signify the days when God helped the Muslims against their enemies and punished the latter.

3741. Commentary :

The mention of prophethood, separate from "the Book" (which means the Law or the Shari'at), shows that while Moses was given the Law, the Prophets who came after him brought no new Law but followed the Torah—the Book of Moses. Elsewhere, the Qur'ān says: *Surely We sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to this judge for the Jews* (5 : 47).

18. And We gave them clear Signs regarding this Affair. ^aAnd they did not differ but after *true* knowledge had come to them, through mutual envy. Verily, thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed.³⁷⁴²

وَاتَيْنَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِّنْ
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝١٨

19. Then We set thee on a clear path concerning the Affair; so follow it,^b and follow not the evil inclinations of those who know not.³⁷⁴³

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَ
لَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝١٩

20. Verily, they will not avail thee aught against Allah. Surely,^c the wrongdoers are friends one of the other; but Allah is the friend of the righteous.

إِنَّهُمْ لَنُغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝٢٠

21. ^dThis *Book contains* clear evidences for mankind and is a guidance and a mercy for a people who possess firm faith.³⁷⁴⁴

هَٰذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْقَوْمِ
يُوقِنُونَ ۝٢١

^a42 : 15; 98 : 5.

^b5 : 49; 6 : 151.

^c5 : 52; 9 : 67.

^d7 : 204; 12 : 109.

3742. Commentary :

“The Affair” signifies “the Affair of the Holy Prophet” (see next verse) and the verse purports to say that the Book of Moses contains many clear prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet and that the Israelites rejected him not because there was any dearth of arguments and Signs and Divine prophecies to support and establish his claim but because of “mutual envy,” *i.e.* they did not like the very idea that a Prophet should have appeared from among the non-Israelites.

3743. Commentary :

This verse makes it quite clear that “the Affair” or “Matter” referred to in the preceding verse signifies the advent of the Holy Prophet and Quranic revelation.

3744. Commentary :

The verse means that just as the Torah “was a guidance and mercy for the Israelites” (see v. 17 above), similarly, this Book, the Qur’ān is a guidance and mercy for the whole of humanity for all time to come.

22. "Do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them like those who believe and do righteous deeds, so that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil *indeed* is what they judge."³⁷⁴⁵

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ
كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً فَحْيَاهُمْ
وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ٢٣

3 23. And Allah has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with an eternal law, so that every soul may be requited for that which it earns; and they shall not be wronged."³⁷⁴⁶

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَىٰ
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ٢٣

^a32 : 19; 38 : 29; 39¹ : 10.

^b14 : 52; 40 : 18; 74 : 39.

3745. Important Words :

اجترحوا (commit) is derived from جرح which means, he worked or wrought with his hand; he earned. جرحه means, he wounded him. They say بس ما جرحت يداك i. e. evil is that which thy hands have wrought. اجترح الشيء means, he earned the thing. اجترح الاثم means, he committed a sin (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The verse embodies an infallible criterion to judge between truth and falsehood and between belief and disbelief. It purports to say that believers and disbelievers are never equal in life or in death. While in life disbelievers, being pitted against truth, meet with defeat and discomfiture, when they die they leave behind no one to remember them or perpetuate their memory

because their own sons and grandsons eventually come to believe in and accept the truth. On the contrary, the cause that is dear to the believers progresses and prospers and they are remembered with honour and respect after their death. The verse, in fact, gives a miniature description of the conditions of the followers of Islam and of its opponents, in this and the next life.

3746. Commentary :

The verse again draws attention to the supreme fact that the creation of the universe and the perfect design and order that pervade it lead to but one conclusion that adequate provision has been made for man's moral and spiritual development, and therefore in the life to come he shall have to render an account of the use he makes of God-given faculties and powers in this life.

24. Hast thou seen him "who has taken his desire for his god, and whom Allah has adjudged astray on the basis of *His* knowledge, "and whose ears and whose heart He has sealed up, and on whose eyes He has put a covering? Who, then, will guide him after Allah *has condemned him*? Will you not then heed?³⁷⁴⁷

25. And they say, "There is nothing but this our present life; we die and we live *here*; and nothing but Time destroys us.' But they have no knowledge of that: they do but conjecture.³⁷⁴⁸

26. And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, their only contention is that they say, 'Bring *back* our fathers, if you are truthful.'

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ
بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ
أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا يُمِيلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتُّوبُوا بِأَبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

a25 : 44;

b2 : 8; 6 : 47; 16 : 109.

c6 : 30; 19 : 67; 23 : 38; 36 : 79.

3747. Commentary :

The verse develops the theme of the preceding verse and purports to say that as man has been created to serve a sublime object and has been endowed with great powers and faculties for the fulfilment of that object, and as the whole universe has been pressed into service for him in order to help him in its achievement, so, if, instead of making a proper use of his God-given powers he worships gods of his own fancy or imagination, he works out his spiritual ruin with his own hands.

3148. Important Words :

الدهر (Time) is infinitive-noun from (*dahara*). They say دهر بالقوم امر مكروه او دهرهم i.e. an evil event befell the people. دهره means, he overcame him; he prevailed upon him or surpassed him.

دهر means, (a) time from the beginning of the world to its end; time long or short, any period or portion of time; (b) fate, fortune; (c) age, epoch; (d) course of events, vicissitudes of time, calamity; and (e) custom, habit, a desire, etc. (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary :

The verse purports to say that when disbelievers are told that they will have to render an account of their deeds before God in the next life, they refuse to believe that there is or can be such a life. On the contrary, they allege that people die and other people take their place and this process goes on till, with the passage of time, the matter becomes dissolved and is destroyed; and that this is the be-all and end-all of human existence, there being no life hereafter.

27. Say, 'It is Allah Who gives you life, then "causes you to die; then He will gather you together unto the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt.' But most men know not.³⁷⁴⁹

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ^{٢٧}

4 28. To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and on the day when the Hour shall come, on that day those who follow falsehood will be the losers.³⁷⁵⁰

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ
يَوْمَئِذٍ يَخْسِرُ الْبَاطِلُونَ^{٢٨}

29. And thou wilt see every people on their knees. Every people will be summoned to its Book, and it shall be said to them, 'This day shall you be requited for that which you did.'³⁷⁵¹

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى
كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ^{٢٩}

^a2 : 29; 22 : 67; 40 : 69.

^b17 : 14; 73 : 7-10.

3749. Commentary :

The verse answers the objection raised by disbelievers in v. 25 above that there is no life beyond the present life on earth. It purports to say that God Who has the power to raise—and He does raise—people who, to all intents and purposes, are spiritually and morally dead and defunct, to a new, vibrant and vigorous life, can and will certainly bring about a Resurrection in the next world. The verse further says that man was nothing. God gave him life to serve a great purpose. If man's life had no purpose, God would not have created him, and if death were the end of all life, God would be regarded as guilty of doing something purposeless. But He is far above that. Therefore a new and better life which knows no decline

or end awaits him in the next world. See also 2 : 29.

3750. Commentary :

The verse implies that as God is the King of the heavens and the earth, He will give the sovereignty of the earth to His righteous servants.

The "Hour" referred to in the verse may signify the day of the final discomfiture of falsehood in this world—preferably the day when Mecca fell.

3751. Commentary :

The words, "every people will be summoned to its Book," suggest that the "Hour" referred to in the previous verse signifies the hour of the reckoning of a people in this very life, because in this life nations are judged by their deeds and are punished or rewarded accordingly.

30. "This is Our Book; it speaks against you with truth. We caused *all* that you did to be *fully* recorded."³⁷⁵²

31. Now, ^bas for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is the clear achievement.

32. But as to those who disbelieved, *it will be said to them*, "Were not My Signs recited unto you? But you were arrogant, and were a guilty people.

33. "And when it was said to you, 'The promise of Allah is certainly true, and *as to the Hour*, there is no doubt about its *coming*,' you said, 'We know not what the Hour is; we think it to be nothing but a conjecture, and we have no certainty concerning it.'³⁷⁵³

34. 'And the evil *consequences* of their deeds will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at shall encompass them.

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يُطِيقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِجُ
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝٣٠

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ
رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْبَيِّنُ ۝٣١

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَأَسْتَكْبِرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ۝٣٢

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ
فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنَّ نَظْنَ إِلَّا ظَنًّا
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِينَ ۝٣٣

وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ۝٣٤

^a17 : 15, 72; 69 : 20, 26; 83 : 21.

^b83 : 23.

^c23 ; 106; 67 : 9-10.

^d15 : 86; 18 : 22; 20 : 16; 22 : 8.

^e16 : 35; 21 : 42; 39 : 49.

3752. Commentary :

The expression كتابها (its Book) mentioned in the previous verse has been substituted by the expression كتابنا (Our Book, i.e. Our Record) in the present verse, because the record of the deeds or actions of nations and individuals is preserved by God and they are judged and requited by Him accordingly. The word كتابها may also signify their *Shari'at*, and the verse

would then mean that every people would be judged according to their own *Shari'at*. See also 69 : 20, 26.

3753. Commentary :

This verse further makes it clear that the "Hour" mentioned in this and the preceding verse refers also to the hour of the complete defeat and discomfiture of disbelievers in this life.

35. And it will be said *to them*, “This day shall We forget you, even as you forgot the meeting of this your day. And your resort is the Fire, and you will have no helpers.”³⁷⁵⁴

36. ‘This *is so*, because ^byou made a jest of the Signs of Allah, and the life of the world deceived you.’ Therefore that day they will not be taken out of it, nor will they be taken back into favour.³⁷⁵⁵

37. All praise, then, belongs to Allah, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of *all* the worlds.

38. ‘And His is the Majesty in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.’³⁷⁵⁶

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسِيكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا
وَمَاؤُكُمْ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ تُصْرِيْنَ ۝٣٥

ذِكْرُكُمْ بِأَنْتُمْ أَخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوءًا وَغَرَّتْكُمْ
الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۖ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرِجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ۝٣٦

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ۝٣٧

وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ۝٣٨

^a7 : 52. ^b5 : 58-59; 6 : 71. ^c30 : 28.

3754. Commentary :

The expression *يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا* (this your day) means, “this day of your promised discomfiture and defeat.”

3755. Important Words :

يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ (taken back into favour) is derived from *عَتَبَ* . *اسْتَعْتَبْتَهُ* means, I sought to please him ; I begged to be received into his favour. The expression *وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ* thus would mean, they shall not be taken back into the favour of God (Lane & Aqrab). See also 41 : 25.

3756. Commentary :

The *Sūra* had opened with the mention of Divine attributes—the Mighty, the Wise, in order to show that the Revealer of the Qur’ān being Mighty and Wise, its Message will find wide publicity and acceptance. After dwelling on the subject as to how Divine Messengers and their righteous followers succeed in their Divine mission while their opponents meet with failure, the *Sūra* closes with calling attention to the same Divine attributes, *viz.*, the Mighty, the Wise, in order to establish the claim made in the beginning that the God of the Qur’ān is a Mighty and Wise God.

